Major oriental influence upon English literature during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, with special reference to Persia

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Major Oriental Influence Upon English Literature During The Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries, With Special Reference to Persia

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Abstract

This thesis analyses the use of Oriental material in English literature during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It emphasizes particularly the use made of Persian material.

Chapter 1 outlines the background: oriental settings, stories and references in English literature from the Middle Ages to the early eighteenth century.

Chapter 2 discusses The Arabian Nights, and the way that its use of exotic material anticipated the Romantic movement, while, at the same time, it had a didactic moral purpose, as did much other eighteenth-century writing. Collections of tales imitating The Arabian Nights and also Johnson's Rasselas betray similar characteristics.

Chapter 3 deals with Sir William Jones, and considers particularly his reasons for believing that knowledge of eastern literature would reinvigorate European literature.

Chapter 4 concerns William Beckford's Vathek, which is seen as a turning-point in the use of oriental material. Vathek is not intended to teach or to help change English literature. Rather, it is a vehicle for the author's dreams and fantasies.

Chapter 5 deals with writers of the Romantic period, including mainly Southey, Byron, Moore and James Morier. With these writers, the main emphasis was on accuracy and realism in their presentation of the East.

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Contents

INTRODUCTION

This study deals with oriental influences in English literature during a period of great enthusiasm in England for the Orient. It traces the causes which motivated the oriental genre, and analyses the literary works which were generated in response to the public interest in oriental life and literature. With the exception of the chapter on Vathek, it pays particular attention to the influences of Persian material on the English writers studied.

The first chapter deals in brief outline with the period from the time of the Crusades to the eighteenth century, with the first appearance of The Arabian Nights. There is little doubt that the Holy Wars in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries helped to develop interest in the East. One result of this influence may be seen, for example, in the clear Arabic influence in the poetry of the troubadours. Another early historical event which tended to focus attention on the Orient was the rise of Genghis Khan, his conquest of large areas that had previously been Muslim, and his further conquest of part of Eastern Europe. Then, in addition to these important historical events occurring in the East which attracted interest in Europe, there was also the important factor that a number of travellers made journeys to Asia, and by the end of the Middle Ages, many books had been written about the area.

In the period of the Renaissance, of course, the main cultural influence was Classical. However, the predominant Classicism of the period failed to stem the tide of interest in the Orient, which remained a fruitful seedbed for much imaginative work. There was also increased knowledge concerning the East in all its aspects, resulting from the many voyages of discovery which

were made. A number of sailor merchants travelled to various parts of Asia in pursuit of riches, a fact which gave rise, in the works of Marlowe and Shakespeare, to a number of references to the idea of wealth being derived from commerce with the East. Also, in much poetry of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, including in particular such an important figure as Milton, imagery associated with the East figures quite largely and is usually employed to build up pictures of luxury and wealth. Increased travel to the area led to increased knowledge of the geography, people, languages, customs and other features of the lands visited, and all these aspects are represented in literary work of the period. These interests also led, ~~however,~~ to interest in the history of the regions, both through access to historians of the various lands themselves and through renewed study of the work of European historians dealing with this history. The historical interest may be clearly seen, for example, in Marlowe's Tamburlaine the Great.

Also in the seventeenth century, and having ultimately a very important influence on the appearance of oriental elements and references in English literature, there was a revival of academic Oriental studies, mainly in the fields of Arabic and Hebrew language and literature. There were three main reasons for this: the first was theological, associated with the realisation of the close connection between Arabic and Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament. The second was the fact that some of the learning of Greece and Rome had been preserved in the Arabic language, and in an age which was very concerned with classical culture, this was a powerful stimulus to its study. Lastly, there was the fact of the revival of commercial relations and diplomatic contacts between Europe and the East.

In the other chapters of the thesis, there is an attempt to study in greater depth some selected works of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century in which oriental subject-matter and themes played a significant part. Thus, chapter two deals mainly with The Arabian Nights and Dr. Johnson's Rasselas. Firstly, there is a consideration of the origins of The Arabian Nights, both before and after its introduction into Europe. Various claims have been made for its provenance, including Indo-Persian, Arabic and Egyptian sources, and these claims are examined. It is argued that, while the work represents a compilation from various sources, there are some very clear Persian elements. Then, there is a study of some of the translations into French and English: that by Antoine Galland into French, and those by W. Lane, John Payne and Sir Richard Burton into English.

Following this initial discussion of the sources and translations, there is an attempt to see the importance of the work in English literature at a time when it has been argued that the new spirit of Romanticism was already latent. An analysis is made of the features of the work which seem to have appealed, both to the increasing numbers of people who were able to read at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and to those who were themselves interested as writers.

The success of The Arabian Nights led, in turn, to the production of numerous other collections of tales, including such examples as The Chinese Tales, The Mogul Tales, The Tartarian Tales and The Persian Tales. The latter, The Persian Tales, is described in some detail, and an examination is made of the similarities between it and The Arabian Nights and also Johnson's Rasselas. It is seen that these various tales, though they appealed to

people's imaginations, and though they came in for some criticism from writers concerned with clasical ideals, were nevertheless recognizable products of the eighteenth century. Their writers employed the strange and fantastic settings and stories as a background for the representation of eighteenth century moral concerns.

Chapter three is a study of Sir William Jones, the eminent orientalist, who became known as 'Persian Jones': his biography, his works, his ideas concerning the value of the Persian and other eastern material he translated, and finally, his influence on the poets Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Southey and Moore. Jones clearly set out to revolutionise English poetry and what, in the eighteenth century, were its neo-classical bases. He was himself of course, a product of his time, and in his own ideas built upon a western classical base. Despite this reservation, however, he did urge some fundamental changes which he believed could be realised through a greater knowledge in Europe of oriental literature.

Jones believed that the quality of imagination in oriental literature was fundamentally different from anything in contemporary European literature. He hoped, by translating some of these oriental writings, and by urging others to do so also, that European poets would be able to benefit from the superior quality of imagination and go on to recreate Western poetry.

Jones regarded the lyric as the supreme poetic genre, thereby reversing the neo-classical hierarchy of genres, which accorded superiority to the epic. He was also very concerned with the pastoral form, which had become an object of disfavour with many writers because it tended to be conventional and sterile.

He argued that the form was very much more alive in the East than in Europe, and that the traditional rather sterile mythology and imagery could easily be replaced by new and fresh imagery from Persian and other Asian literatures.

Willaim Beckford's Vathek forms the subject of chapter four, and there is an attempt to justify the view that this work represents a major turning-point in the development of orientalism in English literature. In the period which we deal with in the earlier chapters, orientalism within the realm of fiction inspired mainly the writings of moral tales. Vathek, however, is altogether more autobiographical and personal, thus foreshadowing the work of the Romantic poets who employed Eastern themes and materials. It also anticipates the coming work of oriental scholars both in the way that lesser-known aspects of oriental life are described and referred to, and also in the elaborate notes appended by Samuel Henley.

The Arabian Nights and the other collections which were written in imitation of it usually domesticated the exotic. Strange and fantastic backgrounds were employed, but only as a vehicle for eighteenth century moral lessons. Beckford's purpose in Vathek was quite different. He aimed, rather, to bring an exotic dream-like quality to his own life. Thus, there is an expression of Beckford's inner dream world through the story and its settings.

This chapter also considers, as part of its study of Vathek, the life of Beckford himself and his other oriental writings. In addition, there is a study of the many sources of Vathek, as well as an investigation of the circumstances under which it came to be written. The, ~~finally~~ lastly, there is an analysis of the influence of Vathek in the work of Byron and in Coleridge's Kubla Khan.

The final chapter, entitled 'New Era of English Interest in the Orient', is concerned with a period at the end of the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, a period when there were a number of historical developments which led to increased attention being paid to the East. The work of three poets, Southey, Byron and Moore, is considered in some detail, as is the prose work of James Morier. It is argued that there was, at this time, a development towards greater realism in the presentation of the East in English literature, and in the work of these writers the distinction between traveller and man of letters virtually disappeared.

Southey, personally, held an unfavourable attitude towards the people, religion and life of the East. His fervent Christianity prevented him from giving full approval to peoples who did not accept his creed. Despite this, however, the East fascinated him, and he used other poems, stories and travel books as source material for his own poems. The greater realism already mentioned is apparent throughout, and Southey seems also to have had an educational purpose, as is evidenced by the scholarly notes appended to his poems, giving details about life in the East.

Byron's treatment of the East in Don Juan and Childe Harold was accurate and realistic. He seemed to feel no need to make his subject-matter more exotic than it really was. The same is also true of Thomas Moore, who although he never visited the East, used almost all the writing on the Middle East that had then been published as sources for his poem Lalla Rookh.

Prose works which are considered in this chapter include those by James Morier, particularly Hajji Baba, and also Thomas Hope's Anastasius.

Hajji Baba is full of detailed information about various aspects of Persian life, but all given so unobtrusively that they do not hinder the development of the story. Morier seems to have succeeded in gaining a complete sympathy with his subject-matter, and the mode of thinking and imagination, and even the style of writing are all very Persian. The picture presented was recognized as being very realistic, and Morier's work even came to be recommended as a guide book to the character of the Persians. Thus, the development towards realism in the presentation of the Orient reached a climax in the picture of Persia and the Persians painted by Morier.

In this thesis, then, an outline is attempted of the main trends in the use of Oriental material in English literature from the time of the Crusades to the early nineteenth century. The main emphasis, however, is on the use of Persian subject-matter during the period of greatest influence, the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. This period saw the most significant developments in the literary use of the East which, at first merely a background for characteristically eighteenth century moral lessons, came to serve purposes associated with writers' own dreams and fantasies before finally being granted a much more realistic treatment.

A BRIEF SURVEY OF LITERARY ORIENTALISM IN ENGLAND BEFORE THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Although the literary history of Orientalism in England does not effectively start until the appearance of Antoine Galland's translation of The Arabian Nights in the early eighteenth century, there is some profit in considering briefly the earlier stages of Anglo-Oriental relations. By doing so we can appreciate all the more the full significance of Galland's work in spurring a real interest in the literature and culture of the East, for until his time ignorance and prejudice were widespread in the West, even during periods of great literary sophistication, such as those of Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Milton.

During the Middle Ages historical events like the Crusades and the gradual establishment of trading routes provided a degree of contact with the East. Clothing fashions amongst the upper classes are one sign of the increasing influence of the East. Oriental names for colours and textures of fabrics, such as 'damask', 'Inde', 'Saracent', and 'gauze', were adopted and by the fifteenth century the turban was a fashionable part of female attire. But the West was generally very eclectic in its preferences and borrowings and this is no less evident in Anglo-Oriental literary relations. Travellers' tales, especially those of Sir John Mandeville, emphasized the marvellous and the supernatural, delighting their readers with accounts of two-headed men and bearded women, gigantic snakes and monsters. Even in the case of evident literary imitation, such as the metrical romances of Floris and Blancheflour and Aucassin and Nicolette, Western writers often deviated greatly from their oriental originals.

The English version of Aucassin and Nicolette takes even greater liberties than its French predecessor, omitting the descriptive passages, illustrative episodes and sentimental analysis with which the French text abounded, in preference for a tale of adventure and a simple, unaffected love story.

After the period of the Crusades narrative poetry departed still further from its oriental sources with changes both in manner and style. In the romances of chivalry the heroes became medieval knights, living people who reflected in their speech and conduct contemporary Western intellectual and social life. Instead of simplicity and naturalness, we have fantasy and exaggeration on all sides. Also, the focal point of interest in the stories changes, reflecting a modified outlook upon life: incident, which in earlier literature was a means to an end, now became an end in itself. Just as the idea of battle changed from being one of a grim struggle in a religious cause to one of sporting exercise in skill and gallantry, so attention was diverted from the character of the hero to the adventures he experienced. There was a new spirit of adventure in literature and this in turn led to a taste for 'romantic' settings, including characters and incidents drawn from the East, and for ornamental and exotic expressions.

This development, increasingly apparent through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, did much to form the popular conception of the Orient which, in the eighteenth century, produced the oriental tale and the romantic poet under an oriental spell, and which in the nineteenth century culminated in serious academic study of the East. While in this way an important factor in the beginnings of Orientalism in England, this development also shares, however, the eclectic bias of earlier literary uses of oriental

material. The rewards of commercial adventuring greatly increased, as the famous accounts of such as Richard Hakluyt and Samuel Purchas testify, and the Orient was often similarly treated in contemporary writing as a source of material wealth ripe for plundering. As quantities of gold, silver, and gems became available as currency, and the fast growing trading operations concentrated much of this wealth into a few hands, so literature of the Elizabethan period frequently reflects the desire to amass wealth in this way.

At the same time as more adventurous navigation was leading to the discovery of the contemporary Orient, the discovery of certain oriental literary classics led to an increased knowledge of the ancient Orient. Englishmen who desired to do so were thus able to acquaint themselves with not only the contemporary, but also the ancient history of such countries as Persia. Often, travellers' reports mixed up factual reporting with a view of the East derived from this ancient literature, and the resulting distorted picture was widely believed to be accurate and up to date. Certain events in recent and ancient Persian history were adapted for the stage, and the information gathered from returning travellers enabled playwrights to incorporate local and exotic detail.

Marlowe's Tamburlaine the Great was the earliest play we know which dealt with what the audience assumed to be the recent history of the East. Such themes as luxury, tyranny and excess are treated faithfully and extensively; Marlowe employed oriental diction in an attempt to create a sense of verisimilitude. This treatment of the subject pointed the way for much later drama with oriental themes. Marlowe based his work on the popular versions of Timur's life, and seems to have paid most attention to Magni

Tamerlanis Scythiarum Imperatoris Vita by Pertus Perodinus, which was published in Florence in 1553. Marlowe, in his portrayal of characters and scenes, used details from classical sources, disguising and colouring them with a list of magnificently outlandish names which had associations with the riches of the East, while also displaying a knowledge of contemporary travellers' accounts. However, Marlowe's plot diverges radically from actual events, and the characters are neither consistently historical nor consistently contemporary figures. (1)

Fulke Greville (Lord Brooke), made greater use than Marlowe of contemporary travel literature, and, as Warner Rice has shown, a substantial part of the narrative of Alham was taken from Ludovico di Varthema, an Italian traveller's Itinerary, which was published in Rome in 1510. (2) One of the Itinerary's chapters, concerning the Sultan of Ormus, and the cruelty of his son against his father, his mother, and his two brothers, corresponds exactly with the first part of the play. Two other plays which have historical significance and show the influence of the East on the dramatic literature of the Elizabethan period are The Sophy (1642) by Sir John Denham and Mirza (circ 1647) by Robert Baron, both in blank verse, and both based upon Sir Thomas Herbert's account of the cruelty of Shah Abbas who commanded his son to be murdered by a servant because of his suspicion of him.

During the Elizabethan period, Eastern influence was much stronger in dramatic literature than in other forms of literary expression. Spectacular Turkish, Moorish and Saracen figures were

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(1) Louis Wann, "The Oriental in Elizabethan Drama", Modern Philology. (Chicago, 1915), XII, No. 7, p. 177.

(2) Warner G.Rice, "The Sources of Fulke Greville's Alham", Journal of English and Germanic Philology. (Urbana, Illinois, 1931), XXX, p. 179-187.

understandably popular on the stage; the robes and jewels of the Orient added splendour to masques and pageants. The Eastern character seems to have provided an ideal villain for Elizabethan audiences, his jealousy, cruelty and intrigue epitomized in his prototype, Marlowe's Tamburlaine. More than forty-five plays in which the oriental is prominent were written in the period between 1580 and the closing of the theatres, a fact which puts beyond serious question the attraction he had for Elizabethan and Jacobean audiences. (3)

In non-dramatic Elizabethan literature, the appearances of the oriental are mainly limited to the numerous polemical writings against him as 'the scourge of Christendom'. Reports from travellers and the flood of news pamphlets, under the pretence of telling the latest news from the East, provided ready made material for these polemicists. Also, the fact that the Turks mercilessly hated the Christians and were a constant threat to Europe at this time made it possible for the views of their attackers to find an audience. Religious zeal and a genuine fear of invasion, then, assisted the flowering of this literature disparaging the infidel. (4)

The end of the sixteenth century and early seventeenth century saw another spate of English voyages to the East. The travellers concerned then wrote travel literature describing their voyages, and this type of literature was in turn reflected in other contemporary writings, including Michael Drayton's Poly-Olbion and Milton's Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained.

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(3) Louis Wann, "The Oriental in Elizabethan Drama", pp.423-447.

(4) Warner G.Rice, Turk, Moor, and Persian in English Literature from 1550-1660 (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1926), p.117.

During the second half of the seventeenth century, travel and contact with different parts of the East were more widespread than before, and books of travel became correspondingly more numerous and more accurate. The range of scenes presented in literature is very much wider and the nationalities portrayed are more various. The entire continent of Asia was drawn upon for settings and characters, but although the Chinese, Hindus and other inhabitants of the Far East shared in the upsurge of interest, Turkey and the Turks were still dominant. Accuracy in the employment of sources was less evident than in the earlier period, especially as regards character portrayal. There were, however, strong tendencies towards a careful presentation of oriental settings and a realistic description of customs, rites and observances, both religious and secular. This had the effect of sharpening the differences of milieux between, for example, that of a comedy of English manners and that of a play set in Turkey or Morocco. (5) The Restoration dramatists were, on the whole, superior to earlier dramatists in the use they made of Oriental material, showing a more intimate knowledge and a keen desire to display this knowledge vividly and concretely, despite their tendency to exaggeration which sometimes led them into extravagance and sentimentality.

The first amd most important drama to display this more accurate knowledge is Sir William D'avenant's Siege of Rhodes (1656). The source he used for the Turkish seige was Knolles's realistic account of it in his History of the Turks (1603). However, details were altered to allow for his development of a love-and-honour situation, adapted from Mlle. de Scudery's

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(5) Louis Wann, "The Oriental in Restoration Drama", p.183.

Ibrahim (1641).

The seventeenth century also witnessed a revival of oriental studies, mainly in the fields of Arabic and Hebrew. But this time the Arabs had lost some of their academic prestige, and stepping into the vacuum that this had created, Englishmen for the first time began to make a serious study of Arabic language and literature. The lives and works of leading orientalists and Arabic scholars, such as William Bedwell (1561-1632), Edward Pococke (1604-1691) and Edmund Castell (1606-1635) mark an epoch in European oriental studies. Chairs of Arabic studies were founded in the universities of Oxford and Cambridge: the Sir Thomas Adam Chair at Cambridge in 1632, followed by the Archbishop Laud Chair at Oxford. In 1636, Abraham Wheelock was professor at Cambridge and Edward Pococke at Oxford. It was Wheelock who encouraged his pupil, Thomas Hyde (1636-1703) to study Persian, and Hyde, who became librarian of the Bodleian Library, and John Greaves, an Oxford professor, are among the early British pioneers in Persian studies. It seems that these scholars, like the Continental Arabists, still thought it useful to pay special attention to Muslim science. Thus a new science was created and in the following century this produced a respectable number of distinguished oriental scholars whose works enriched the cultural inheritance of both the Arabs and Europe. (6)

When we try to examine the reasons for this wave of enthusiasm for the East, three factors suggest themselves. Theological interest must come first, since this was undoubtedly a prime motive, once the close relationship of Arabic and Hebrew,

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(6) Bernard Lewis, British Contributions to Arabic Studies. (London, 1941), p. 15.

the language of the Old Testament, was realized. Secondly, the Arabic language had been the means of preserving some of the learning of Greece and Rome. When students of history and civilization realized this in the period after the Renaissance they became increasingly aware of the cultural value of Arab language and history, and consequently devoted themselves to their study. The revival of commercial relations and diplomatic contacts between England and the Near East should be reckoned as the third factor in the development of oriental studies during this period. Thus, the seed of oriental studies was sown in the seventeenth century and grew until it bore abundant fruit in the eighteenth century.

The East appears in eighteenth century literature in numerous and varied forms, which is not surprising when the many close relationships between England and the East, commercial, political and social, are considered. However, as in the previous age, oriental influence was felt most directly in France and it was French influence which largely determined the nature and scope of Eastern content in English prose and poetry. This fact is illustrated very clearly in the case of what came to be known in England as The Arabian Nights, which will be one of the main subjects of the next chapter.

THE MAGIC TALE OF SHAHRZAD

Eighteenth century orientalism begins with the most popular of all translations from oriental secular literature, Antoine Galland's version of The Arabian Nights. This work, which presented a panorama of the Eastern world, appeared at a time when literary expression as well as tastes were moving away from prevailing classicism. The appearance of this collection of tales, with their vivid description of the life, the colour and the glamour of the East, naturally opened a new chapter in the history of oriental fiction in England. Paying tribute to its popularity James Beattie called it; 'A book which most young people in this country are acquainted with.' (1) The introduction to an early nineteenth century edition was perhaps overgenerous in its estimate of the book's merits, but it nevertheless gives some indication of the avidity with which the tales were read:

> "It may safely be asserted that such fictions ... have contributed more to the amusement and delight of every generation since the fortunate appearance of these tales ... than all the works which the industry and imagination of Europeans have provided for the introduction and entertainment of youth ... " (2)

In the period before the nineteenth century, literary and factual descriptions of the East were still relatively few and The Arabian Nights must have provided an important source for the period's popular image of

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(1) James Beattie, Dissertation Moral and Critical. (London, 1783), p. 510.

(2) H.W. Weber, (ed.) Tales of the East: comprising the Most Popular Romances of Oriental Origin; and the Best Imitations by European Authors: With New Translations and additional Tales, Never Before Published. (London, 1812), I, 'Introduction', p. 1.

these previously little known lands. The full title of the fourth English edition claims a high importance for the work as an actual mirror of Eastern life:

> Arabian Nights ... containing a better account of the Costumes, Manners, and Religion of the Eastern Nations, viz: Tartars, Persians, and Indians, than is to be met with any (sic) Author hitherto published. (3)

The Arabian Nights certainly portrays a bright and glittering world. As Shahrzad recounts her tales, the cities of the East emerge in varied hues and colours: the bazaars, mosques and streets take form, and are animated by an assortment of native figures. Although the actual East remained remote, an image of it as a place of sensuous brilliance emerged in Western minds. As an image it was essentially superficial; the realities cf this far-off world, its modes of tnought and its cultural traditions, of which The Arabian Nights was one small aspect, remained largely unknown in the West. Yet, despite these inevtiable limitations, this work represented an important introduction to the ways of a previously unrecognized world. The familiar Western conception of the Orient owes much of its substance to The Arabian Nights: veils, slaves, harems, sultans, genii, the prophet, the Alcoran all figure largely in these tales. The world depicted is glittering, and it has come to be absorbed in literature as a metaphor for a world of dream, and this sense of dream is always present in The Arabian Nights, a quality which Conant describes as 'the sense of reality in the midst of unreality.' (4)

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(3) The Arabian Nights, Fourth edition, (London, 1713-1715).

(4) M.P. Conant, The Oriental Tale .... p. 239.

History of the introduction of The Arabian Nights into Europe is a subject of considerable interest. It was first translated into French and then into English. Its title is somewhat misleading, as it is almost certainly not a purely Arabic creation and was probably based on an anthology entitled Alf Layla Wa Layla, (The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night). The early history of the work is obscure, but it is clear that the collection of tales passed through several different stages before its arrival at the form in which it is now known. D.B. Macdonald argues that the collection assumed many and various forms after being adapted from a Persian collection, Hezar Afsana, (A Thousand Legends), and claims that the title is the only element common to all the versions. (5) Scholars have not yet reached the stage of being able to distinguish and date each step in the process of development, but despite the lack of conclusive evidence, conjectures have been made, with regard to the origins of the compilation we now have. Irene Gerhardt, for example, argues convincingly that the collection represents three distinct layers:

(1) Some Persian stories, apparently containing Indian elements, adapted into Arabic in or before the 10th century, and some others, perhaps composed directly in Arabic, of which the material is of Persian provenance.

(2) A number of stories of varying length composed in Baghdad and its environs, approximately between the beginning of the 10th, and the end of the 12th century.

(3) A final addition of stories composed in Egypt, probably from the 11th century onward, but often later, notably in the 13th-14th centuries. (6)

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(5) Duncan Black Macdonald, "The Earlier History of the Arabian Nights.", Journal of Royal Asiatic Society. (London, 1924), p. 390.

(6) Mia Irene Gerhardt, The Art of Story Telling: A Literary Study of The Thousand And One Nights. (Leiden, 1963), p.9.

During the eighteenth century, despite the fact that The Arabian Nights was translated into many European languages, little attempt was made to elucidate its early history. It was not until the nineteenth century, almost one hundred years after Galland's first translation, 1704-1717, that oriental scholars began to discuss its background and origins. The obscurity which surrounds its origins arises partly because, although we know that the collection had been in existence for many centuries, no manuscript apart from that dated 955/1548, and found by Antoine Galland, has ever been discovered. Also, manuscripts of the earlier works on which various scholars have thought the compilation was based have completely eluded scholars; neither the Persian Hezar Afsana nor the Arabic Alf Layla Wa Layla, nor a later verified version has ever been found. (7) Furthermore, since early references to the collection by other authors never go beyond passing references to its title and prologue, we know little of its content or history. One of the reasons for the lack of documentary evidence must be that, although the stories were originally written down in collected form, the usual means by which they have been transmitted from generation to generation is oral. Even today the compilation still survives as a form of entertainment in the Eastern world, as the respected scholar A.J. Arberry points out in an evocative passage of reminiscence:

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(7) Macdonald, "The Earlier History ...", pp. 367, 397.

> The last time I heard the Nights being recited was ... it was the unbelievable atmosphere of medieval Islam. In the great square outside the ancient medina, the (Jamaat el Fna), a large crowd of the white-burnoused Berbers were squatting on their heels in a wide circle as a story-teller, with a rare gift for dramatization, recounted for their gusty delectation of old tales that are ever new. He had his audience spellbound by the hour, despite the many counter-attractions - the fencers with their long sticks, the snake-charmers, the musicians scraping their incredible fiddles, the boy dancers, the preachers, the scent-vendors, the dentists, the blood-letters, and, by night, the flame-swallowers and the enchanters. (8)

In view of the fact that these stories were, for a number of centuries, essentially part of an oral tradition, it is inevitable that they should have been repeatedly modified and reinterpreted, especially since their cyclical structure, which they share with other Eastern folk stories, is particularly conducive to personal adaptation. During the long period of its growth and development, then, local story cycles, such as those peculiar to Baghdad and to Egypt, as well as single tales from many lands, contributed to this masterpiece of folk literature. (9) Opinions concerning the origins of The Arabian Nights may be roughly divided into two schools of thought. The first holds that the anthology is of Indo-Persian origin, while the other postulates that it is an Arabian work, entirely different from the Hezar Afsana. Most scholars are in agreement, however, that whatever its earliest origins, the general tone of The Arabian Nights has distinctly Arabic qualities.

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(8) Arthur John Arberry, Scheherezade. (London, 1960), 'Introduction', p. 21.

(9) Macdonald, "The Earlier History .... ', p. 357.

"The Arabian Nights", Edinburgh Review or Critical Journal. (Edinburgh & London, 1886), CLXIV. p. 192.

The Austrian orientalist, Von Hammer-Purgstall, supports the theory of Indo-Persian origins. He was the first scholar to draw attention to a passage contained in the book Muruj al-Dhahab (usually translated as The Golden Meadows) (345/956) by Al-Masudi. Writing about stories related by the Ikhbariyyun (pseudo-chronicles), Al-Masudi states that these people created stories about the Magian fire-temples, Baalbek, Iram Dhat al-Imad, and other subjects, in an attempt to create pleasing and historically acceptable stories to please their ruler. 'These stories', he continues, 'are like the books transmitted to us and translated for us from Persian, Indian and Greek. The composition of which had the same purpose mentioned above-such as the book of Hezar Afsana, or translated from Persian to Arabic':

> of a Thousand Khurafas, for Khurafa in Persian means afsana. The peole call this book A Thousand Nights. It is the story of the king, the vizier and his daughter and his nurse whose names are Shirzad (sic) and Dinazad. And such as The Book of Farza and Shimas, with stories of kings of India and their viziers, and such as the book of Sinbad or other books of this nature. (10)

Von Hammer-Purgstall has established certain important facts here:

that the Hezar Afsana had actually been rendered into Arabic in the reign of Al-Mansur (754-775 A.D.) when a spate of such translations occurred; that this archetype was known in Arabic as A Thousand Nights; and finally, that the Arabian Nights and the Hezar Afsana had an identical prologue. (11)

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(10) Abu al-Hassan Masudi, Muruj al-Dhahab. ed. C. Barbier de Meynard, 9 vols. (Dublin, 1728), I, pp. 1-4.

(11) Joseph Horvitz, "The Origin of the Arabian Nights", Islamic Culture. (Heyderabad, 1927), I, P. 40.
Von Hammer-Purgstall, "Contes Inedits des Mille et Une Nuits"

The Hezar Afsana was probably the oldest collection of tales which existed in Persia, and various biographers of ancient times mention it. A passage in the Al-Fihrist (987 A.D.), by Mohammad ibn Ishaq al-Nadim, provides some interesting information about the tellers of night-stories (asmar) and about the stories recounted for amusement (khurafa).

According to this account, Hezar Afsana was written at the instigation of Homai, the daughter of King Bahram. This king was the penultimate ruler in the dynasty of Poshdadyan, which ended with the death of King Dara and the advent of Alexander the Great. This passage is cited by Von Hammer-Purgstall in his argument for the Persian origin of The Arabian Nights:

> The ancient Persians were the first who made separate compilations of Khurafat and made books in which to put them and laid them in the libraries and in some gave speaking parts to animals. The Ashkanian kings, who were the third dynasty of the kings of Persia, and after them the Sassanian kings, had a special part in the development of this branch of literature, which found Arabic translators, and the eloquent and the rhetoricians took it up and corrected it and wrote it in elegant style and constructed, according to the idea of it, what resembled it. The first book, then which was made according to this ideas was "The Book of Hezar Afsana" which means 'A Thousand Khurafa'. The cause of that was that one of their kings, whenever he had married a woman and passed a night with her, killed her on the tomorrow. But once he married a girl of royal descent who was possessed of understanding and information, who was called Shahrzad. Then after she had come together with him, she began telling him a story and carrying the story along at the finish of the night in such a way as to lead the king to preserve her alive and that he would ask her in the following night about the completion of the story until she had passed a thousand nights, and she had a son, which she showed to him, informing him of the strategem she had used with him. The he admired her intelligence, loved her, and spared her life. In all this she was assisted by her king's stewardess who was called Dinarzad.

> And it has been said that this book was composed for the princess Humai daughter of Bahram. It contains nearly two hundred stories, one story often occupying several nights. I have repeatedly seen the complete book. (12)

It is absolutely certain, then, that at the time when the Al Fihrist was written, A.H. 377 and 400 (d.1011), the Hezar Afsana was already in existence. It contained fewer than two hundred stories, but covered 1001 Nights; the number was symbolic, because in Persian, a thousand is a symbol for a very large number. These stories then found their way into later collections, as often happens with popular folk-tales, and it was one of these collections which came to be entitled The Arabian Nights. The change of title from 1000 to 1001 nights can be explained by the usual oriental preference for odd numbers, especially those which represent a round number over-stepped by one. Precedents for the use of the number 1001 can be traced from the time when Turkish influence became dominant throughout the East, and E. Littman is probably correct when he ascribes the adoption of 1001 to represent a large number to the alliterative Turkish phrase 'bin bir'. (13)

Von Hammer's theory of the book's Persian origins is supported if one considers some points pertaining to Persian taste, and tradition. Firstly, it is known that Persian kings and their courtiers were, from the very earliest period of recorded history, fond of listening to stories and tales. Consequently, it became useful for several raconteurs to be present at court; the king's ministers were always ready to amuse their

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(12) Mohammad ibn Ishaq al-Nadim, Kitab al-Fihrist. ed. G. Flugel, (Leipzig, 1871), p. 304f.

(13) Horvitz, "The Origin of ... ", p. 41.
See also: E. Littman, "Alf Layla Wa Layla", Encyclopadia of Islam.

sovereign with suitable tales, and, in addition, professional story-tellers were paid to perform. Ferdowsi, the great Persian epic poet, narrates in his Shah Nameh (The Book of the Kings) how Bozargmehr, minister of Khosrow Anushirvan, would give his master advice by the use of morality fables containing aphorisms of great wisdom (14). Nizami Ganjavi, in Haft Paykar (The Seven Images), tells the story of how King Bahram Gur was entertained by his seven mistresses. Each one came from a different country, and they selected for him in turn tales of wonder and adventure from their own lands. The same author, in Khosrow and Shirin, speaks of King Khosrow's request to the maids attending his Armenian mistress, that they should recite to him fables and tales in order to make the time pass more pleasantly. (15)

Secondly, in support of Von Hammer's theory, the professional story-tellers of Persia were obliged to replenish their stock of stories from time to time, either because their old collection was in danger of becoming exhausted, or because the stories they knew were inappropriate to a particular set of circumstances, and a new method of treatment was therefore necessary. They set about this work of replenishment either by travelling abroad themselves to collect fresh material from foreign countries, or by paying others to gather material on their behalf. The expedition of Borzoyeh, court physican of Khosrow Anushirvan (531-579 A.D.) in search of the rare Indian book, The Fables of Bidpay, indicates

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(14) Abulqasim Ferdawsi, Shah-Nameh. ed. M. Dabirsiaqi, 6 vols. (Tehran, 1956), V. pp. 2118-2129.

(15) Nizami Ganjavi, Haft Paykar. ed. V. Dastgirdi, (Tehran, 1937), p. 134f.

the urge felt by Persians to discover new supplies of anecdotes, for which they were prepared to pay almost any price. (16)

Thirdly, the stories collected by these various means were transmitted in an expurgated form to the select audience of the Persian court. Any vulgar or obscure sections were either removed or refined in accordance with Persian tastes. The language had to be elegant, with an abundance of colourful metaphors and similes to adorn the tale. The descriptions of the palaces and of the manners of legendary kings had to be modified to ensure that they depicted nothing in breach of court etiquette. The parts played by women were particularly liable to alteration, the story-tellers being very anxious to avoid any reference which might possibly be thought vulgar and therefore give offence. These features are all to be found in The Arabian Nights.

Fourthly, the oldest known Persian stories were concerned with the histories of kings, and with their general behaviour or methods of administering justice. The settings chosen for these were often foreign lands in ancient times, or reference was made to kings of rival dynasties not held in very high regard by the court where the story was being told. In almost all remaining Persian story-books, allusions to the cruelty of kings, especially where there is no later repentence, are made with reference to rulers of far off lands, such as China and Hindustan, or else to Persian kings having no connection with the ruling dynasty.

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(16) Edward Denison Ross, The Ocean of Story. 10 vols. (London, 1924-28), V. pp. 7-11.

Great care was taken by the individual story-teller in his use of phrases and expressions, so that no opportunity should be afforded jealous colleagues to bring about his downfall. Any careless remark was likely to be seized upon by rivals and presented to the king as a subtly disguised insult to his majesty. In all the books of the time which deal with the subject of court etiquette and the manner in which royalty and high-ranking members of the court should be addressed, great emphasis is laid on the necessity of using language carefully and selectively. In The Arabian Nights, this extreme respect for Persian rulers and apparent concern not to offend their sensibilities is also to be found, adding to the weight of evidence in favour of its Persian origins.

Lastly, the Persian origin of The Arabian Nights is supported by the fact that it contains a number of old Persian names and references to Persian customs and festivals. For example, Old Persian names such as Shahryar, Shahzaman, Shahrzad and Dunyazed are found unchanged in Arabic versions of the book. The kings who are mentioned in the stories were members of the pre-Islamic Persian dynasties, especially the Sassanian house to which both Bahram and Shahpour, for example, belonged. These names would have been unfamiliar to the Arabs in both sound and structure, and it is unusual in Arab literature for foreign names to be adopted in their native form. More importantly, the Arabs were too hostile towards the last dynasty of Persian pre-Islamic kings to allow Arab story-tellers to compose stories glorifying their image. Persian customs, the Persian system of justice, and Persian national feasts also figure. Allusions to the feasts of Mehragan and Nowrooz, the ancient

Persian festivals in the pre-Islamic Zoroastrian tradition, would seem to provide very strong evidence that the original source of the tales was not Arab.

It has been argued, however, by advocates of the work's Arab origin that non-Arabic features in Arabic versions of the tales may have been introduced in order to add an extra dimension of foreign colour. This does not seem very likely, however, in view of the fact that the tales' treatment of Persian rulers and ancient Persian festivals, for which the Arabs would have felt little but contempt is almost sycophantic. It is much more probable that the non-Arabic material is original, and that Arabic details were added later when the work was translated into Arabic.

E.W. Lane, J. Payne and R.F. Burton were among the earliest translators of The Arabian Nights to discuss the question of its origin, which all three believed to be Arabic. Lane contended, on the basis of passages showing the state of Egyptian society, and frequent references to places in Cairo, that it had originated in Cairo at a fairly late period. He suggested that it was the product of works by two authors, and that the second may have taken over the work near the beginning of the sixteenth century. It is part of his argument that the 1001 Nights and the 1000 Nights were different works, and he maintains that the version with which we are familiar today was:

> formed on the model and partly of the contents of the 1000 Nights; but it is also evident that most of its best tales, and those which constitute its chief portion, are Arab compositions (though not entirely the offspring of Arab invention); and as the introduction has been greatly altered, it is most probable that other portions which were derived, as far as their genera!

plan and main incidents are concerned, from 1000 Nights, were altered in a similar manner. (17)

It is not inconceivable, in Lane's view, that the original of 1000 Nights was augmented by the additions of various individuals over a long period of time, and that this greatly enlarged anthology was then employed as an 'immediate model' and in some degree the ground work of 1001 Nights. (18). He denies the possibility that the 1001 Nights may have been tampered with in the same way. He further suggests that only the general outline of the book, plus a few foreign stories, had been retained from the older collection, and that the rest of the new compilation, particularly the material of non Arabic origin, had been adapted to the conventions and demands of the author's society, thereby losing any discernible relationship to its original. (19). Lane notes that in the various editions of 1001 Nights no significant variations can be detected, and that the few minor differences that do exist are of no importance. (20). If transcribers made changes, then one would expect different versions to have come to light; since none have done so, he infers that the work has come to us as it was originally composed. Works similar to the Nights, such as Baybars and Abuzayd, were continually retold and transcribed by public story-tellers, and yet they remained intact. (21). Thus, there is no reason to suppose that the same may not have been true of The Arabian Nights.

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(17) Edward William Lane, The Book of The Thousand and One Nights. 3 vols. (London, 1839), III. p. 738.

(18) Ibid, p. 739.

(19) Lane, The Book of .... I. 'preface', pp. ix-xiii, xv.

(20) Ibid. pp. xif, III. p. 739.

(21) Ibid. I. xi, III. p. 739.

An article published in the Athenaeum exemplifies the general reception given to Lane's work. (22) The reviewer agrees with Lane's argument that some of the social features depicted are not inconsistent with life in Egypt, but considers that this fact is not as significant as Lane claimed. The lives of Muslims in old Arab countries were regulated by the same religious influences, and therefore similar social features to those of Egypt would have been found elsehwere in the Arab world. The reviewer points out that copyists and compilers are known to have been in the habit of altering or suppressing just those details, such as names, localities, costumes, food and drink, upon which future investigations might base their theories. (23)

The reviewer also disagrees with Lane about the date of composition. He argues that The 1001 Nights had been in circulation since the Fatimid era of the 12th century A.D., three to five centuries earlier than Lane believed. In actual fact, however, we lack conclusive evidence about whether the Fatimid Nights was at all similar to ours, and therefore Lane's thesis may not be wrong in its assumption that the Fatimid Nights was entirely different from the present collection.

Another hypothesis, perhaps more reasonable than Lane's, is that an ancient version of the Nights was taken to Egypt from elsewhere, and was given its definitive form there before being transmitted to the Arab world. This theory seems highly plausible in view of the discovery of a

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(22) "The Arabian Nights Entertainments", Athenaeum. (London, 1838), October, pp. 737-739

"The Book of Thousand and One Nights", Athenaeum. (1839), September, pp. 741-742.

(23) Ibid. (1838), p. 738. Edinburgh Review. (1886), p. 192.

manuscript of the ninth century A.D., which was apparently carried to Egypt from Antioch. (24)

Like Lane, Payne and Burton both believed that the first collection of the tales was made by Arabs, although some of the individual stories came from elsewhere. They put forward the view that the thirteen stories which are common to all manuscripts and editions constitute the original collection, and that these stories can be dated between the eighth and thirteenth centuries A.D. (25) Their opinion is founded upon the perception that the general tone of the nucleus of thirteen tales is consistent, whereas later tales vary both in number and position in the collection. The most ancient tales, Payne and Burton argued, are not part of the nucleus, but are stories of Indian origin, interpolated into the collection at some period during its development. Payne and Burton rejected the theory of a single author and suggest that a number of scribes and compilers contributed to the growth of the work. (26)

One definite point which can be made, amidst the uncertainty and controversy, is that the attempts which scholars have made to substantiate their claims for the origin of the whole collection have been ill-founded. This failure to make a definitive case is probably the result of a tendency to apply to the entire work evidence which has relevance for only parts of it.

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(24) Nabia Abbot, "A Nineth-Century Fragment of The 'Thousand Nights', New Light on The Early History of The Arabian Nights", Journal of Near Eastern Studies. (Chicago,1949), VIII. pp. 129-164

(25) John Payne, The Book of The Thousand Nights and One Night. 9 vols. (London,1882-84), IX. pp. 289f.

Richard Francis Burton, The Book of The Thousand Nights and A Night. 10. vols. (London,1885-86), X. pp. 80f.

(26) Payne, The Book of .... IX. pp.288-291.
Burton, The Book of .... X. pp. 93-94, 127.

The work has been claimed as exclusively Indo-Persian, exclusively Egyptian and exclusively Arabic, but the evidence in support of these hypotheses is unconvincing. A more profitable approach is to consider the individual stories separately, an approach which was even suggested by Burton, one of the earliest scholars to work on the problem. He urged that it might be possible to cut through later adaptations and mutations and discover the date and source of each tale by a careful separation of 'the subject matter and the language manner.' (27) In the early use of this method of procedure, topographical clues and names were frequently relied upon for the purpose of dating, but this was eventually found to be unreliable, since details of this kind were often later interpolations, and were even, on occasion, contradictory. Later evidence drawn from local traditions or behaviour peculiar to a certain age, such as the use of tobacco, coffee, guns or wines, came to be regarded as more dependable. (28)

The evidence derived from this method of work remains tenuous, but there has been a limited amount of agreement concerning the approximate dates of various parts of the collection. The inaugural phase of the work appears to have been the eighth or ninth century, when, in the time of Al-Mansur (d.159/775) or of Al-Mamun (d. 218/833), a series of translations brought a proto-collection into existence. (29) To this inaugural phase have been assigned the prologue, and what Burton and Payne termed the 'nucleus' of thirteen stories. The core of the collection seems to have been adopted into Arabic between the ninth and tenth

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(27) Burton, The Book of .... X. p. 67.

(28) Burton, The Bock of .... X. pp. 85-92

(29) Hammer, "Preface", I, xxf.

centuries A.D. Between that time and the twelfth century, some Baghdadi stories were composed and added. These additions were of varying length and contained Abbassid elements. The most recent tales are usually regarded as Egyptian and as dating from the 15th and 16th centuries A.D., but the collection had already taken on the general character which still distinguishes it during the thirteenth century. (30)

The Arabian Nights, then, grew as a consequence of incorporation, augmentation and absorption, but it eventually became, as Horwitz puts it 'a mirror of the Arabic-Islamic world of the first six centuries; it resembles a kaleidoscope in which the plots of the popular story-teller's art of all peoples and times pass before us in their motley variety.' (31)

I now wish to glance briefly at the history of the Nights after its appearance in Europe, a history which is in many ways as complex as its earlier history. A comparison of the two separate developments offers some interestings insights. Like the Hezar Afsana in Baghdad, the various manuscripts of The Nights in Europe have been subject to either literal translation or paraphrases, have been expurgated and abridged; they have been Europeanised, just as the Hezar Afsana was Islamised. Also, there have been a large number of variants on the first editions, the Galland manuscript, just as there were variants in the Hezar Afsana. To a great extent, in fact, the manner in which these European editions multiplied was determined by the previous oriental development of The Nights, since European editors received many of the stories in oral form from Arab narrators.

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(30) Nikita Elisséeff, Thèmes et motifs des Mille et Une Nuits. (beyrouth, 1949), p. 25.

(31) Horvitz, "The Origin ...." p. 57.

It is the French scholar, Antoine Galland (1647-1715), who can be credited with the dicovery of The Arabian Nights for Europe. He was one of the French king's 'Jeunes de Langues', and had worked as secretary to the French Embassy in Constantinople. He initiated a search for manuscripts with which he might possibly work, and in the course of this search, he heard about the existence of a collection which comprised the stories contained in The Nights. He procured from Syria a manuscript in four volumes, and he at once determined to translate it. This manuscript, of which the first three volumes are extant, can be actually dated as being from the fifteenth century, which means that it is one of the oldest manuscripts of the works known. In 1709, while staying in Paris, Galland was fortunate enough to discover a new source of information; he met a Maronite from Aleppo, named Hanna, who knew a large number of stories by neart. Hanna narrated several of these stories to Galland, who wrote brief summaries of them in his diary, to be written out at some later date. We know, although the manuscripts are now lost, that Hanna copied out several tales for him in Arabic. The written tales from Syria, together with Hanna's contributions, enabled Galland to complete his series of twelve volumes, which, appearing between 1703 and 1713, contributed to Europe's introduction to The Arabian Nights. (32)

Galland was very ambitious in his attitude towards his work, and it is known that he conceived many lengthy projects which, despite being a productive worker, he never brought to fruition. The same fate might

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(32) Gerhardt, The Art of .... pp.12-3.

well have befallen the Mille et Une Nuit, as he entitled the tales, and it is a tribute to the charm and interest of the stories that he saw the work through to compilation. He regarded it as being primarily a source of entertainment for himself. As he wrote to a friend, Huet, before the manuscript arrived; 'Ce sera de quoi me divertir pendant les longues sorties.' (33)

Any student of the subject who is familiar with the book in Arabic can appreciate why Galland found the task a pleasurable relaxation. The work presents a favourable contrast to the ambiguities, intricate language and archaic vocabulary of the classical Arabic texts, for, although no dictionaries were available, the Arabic of Alf Layla Wa Layla is mainly colloquial and easy to understand. Its style is unadorned and straight-forward, and the vocabulary, though not entirely without difficulties, is limited to a comfortable range. Galland could be casual in his approach to the translation, since he felt no particular reverence for the text. He knew that the book had never interested Arab literati and was in fact regarded, as is still to a certain extent the case, as unworthy of serious consideration because of its folk origin and unsophisticated style. If The Nights has gained any recognition in the Arab world as a significant work, it is largely due to Galland's efforts. If it had not been translated and acclaimed in the West, it might well have remained without honour in its own country. It is only very recently, with the publication of Suhayr Al-Qalamawi's book-length study in Arabic, in 1966, that there

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(33) Mohamed Abdel-Halim, Antoine Galland: sa vie et son ouvre. (Paris, 1964), p. 108.

has been any clear evidence that the medieval collection of tales is really being taken seriously in the Arab world. As this critical study admits, it is the Alf Layla's fame in the West that has caused the belated interest now observed among Arab scholars and men of letters. (34)

Galland's twelve duodecimo volumes were brought across the Channel and translated into English by an anonymous Grub Street translator. (35) The translation created something of a literary controversy amongst the critics and several orientalists came to hold an unfavourable opinion of the English version. W. Lane maintained that the chief faults to be found in the early English version of The Nights could be attributed to Galland, who changed the character of the tales. It is certainly true that, in order to ensure popular success, Galland adapted the tales in many ways to suit western conventions and standards of literary taste. Furthermore it is generally accepted that, since he was aware of the imperfections and omissions in the manuscript he was using, he endeavoured to substitute for the missing portion a number of Persian, Turkish and Arabic tales which had no connection with the original. Payne condemned the French text because Galland had overstepped the bounds of normal literary practice; 'Both in abridgement and amplification of the original his sins of omission and commission are innumerable; and he permits himself not unfrequently the most inexplicable; and apparently wilful perversions..' (36)

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(34) Suhayr al-Qalamawi, Alf Layla Wa Layla. (Cairo, 1966)

(35) D.B. Macdonald, "A Bibliographical and Literary Study of The First Appearance of The Arabian Nights", Library Quarterly. (Chicago, 1932) II. pp. 387-420.

(36) Payne, The Book of .... IV. p. 271.

These criticisms of Galland's work have some substance, but probably the main fault lies in his omission of many valuable and interesting, though often minute, details peculiar to Arab society. It is just the inclusion of such details which lends the English versions of Lane, Payne and Burton the charm of good tales, and enables the reader to realize vividly the picturesque Arab lands. Galland's weakness may derive from his inadequate knowledge of Arab manners and literature, and from his over-elaborate language, which gives a false character to a work originally written in a plain, restrained style. Galland's translation also had the effect of misleading people into thinking that the life it depicted was typical of any Eastern country, while in actual fact, as Lane asserted, it was only representative of Arab countries, and in particular Egypt. The tales are almost certainly of varying origin, but because of the way in which they are presented by Galland, they give a fairly uniform picture of the life, manners, modes of thought and language of the court during the sixteenth century reign of the Memluk Sultans of Egypt. (37)

Nevertheless, despite these reservations, Galland must receive credit for having been the first to attempt to present these oriental stories in Europe. Despite its faults and limitations, it was Galland's work which prepared the way for later translations, including those in English.

One translation which owed a great deal to Galland's was that of Jonathan Scott which appeared in six volumes in 1811. This was very largely an immediate rendition of Galland, though the last volume also contained some new stories taken from another manuscript of dubious origin. (38) Scott's translation did not

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(37) Lane, The Book of .... I. 'preface', p.xvii.

(38) Mia I Gerhardt, The Art of Story-Telling, (Leiden, 1963), p.67.

achieve any lasting reputation though we shall have occasion to refer to it later as the version known to Byron. Henry Torrens' translation, which appeared in 1839, had little chance to make any impression. Hearing of the imminent appearance of Lane's, Torrens broke off after finishing only the first volume.

Lane's translations appeared in three large, illustrated volumes during the period 1839-42. He based his work on an Arabic version, but limited himself to rendering only a relatively small part of the large number of tales in The Nights. He stated in the preface that he thought this considerably shortened version preferable to a translation of the whole corpus of tales: 'I have thought it right to omit such tales, anecdotes, etc., as are comparatively uninteresting or on any account objectionable. In other words, I insert nothing that I deem greatly inferior in interest to the tales in the old version.' (39) Furthermore, the stories which Lane does present are given an abridged version, a fact which the preface also attempts to justify: 'Certain passages which, in the original work, are of an objectionable nature, I have slightly varied; but in doing this, I have been particularly careful to render them so as to be perfectly agreeable with Arab manners and customs.' (40) It is deplorable, from the point of view of scholarship, that, although the preface refers to abridgement, the suppressions and alterations are only occasionally referred to in the notes. It is possible, also, that Lane's method occasionally damaged the story, as for example in the pious tale entitled 'The Godly Man of Israel', which appears here as 'Advantages of Piety and Industry'. Probably for reasons of decorousness, Lane omitted the attempt at seduction of the godly man by a worldly woman; however, since this event is important to the plot, he is forced to make some reference to it: 'an event befell him which constrained him to throw himself from the top of lofty house, in order to avoid an act of disobedience unto his lord.' (41) This obfuscation curtails the story and is tantalising and frustrating for the reader.

(39) Lane, The Book of .... I. p.xiii.

(40) Ibid. p.xiii.

(41) Ibid. II. p.573.

In a sense, Lane's translation fell between two stools. He meant his work to be family reading, and this purpose made it imperative to remove anything that might seem improper. On the other hand, he produced what is essentially a scholar's translation, in a schorlarly style: the dialogue is unnecessarily digni fied; the verse, when not omitted, is rendered awkwardly, and there are no prose rhymes. The result is perhaps most aptly described as plodding. Yet despite these criticisms, Lane's work is not without merit. One of its most outstanding features is its solid and scholarly annotation, a contribution to study of The Nights that has immense value and remains unique. Supported by carefully executed woodcut illustrations, the notes contain explanations of Arab customs, ceremonies, costumes, housing, household itensils and many more topics, and for purposes of comparison, give many quotations from other Arab authors. Lane lived for many years in Egypt, at a time when that society still retained many of the characteristics it had had during the Middle Ages, and he adapted himself to the way of life and outlook of the Egyptian Moslem society. He had a gift for conveying what he saw and learned, and for this reason, his notes often assist in the exact understanding and visualizing of the scenes and events described in the stories. Some of the notes tend to be specialized, often discussing questions like the correct orthography of Arabic words, and these are too detailed and erudite for the general reader, whom Lane's work purports to enlighten. Still his translation was the first attempt to present The Nights as, not merely entertainment, but a work worthy of study, and in this attempt it is still successful.

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The nine volumes of Payne's translation, on which he worked for six years, appeared between 1882 and 1884. As far as it is possible to characterize him, from his literary output and from T.H. Wright's Life of John Payne (1919), he was a scholar with a gift for languages, as well as being a prose and verse translator and a prolific minor poet. He translated the whole of The Rubayyat of Omar Khayyam, but it is Fitzgerald's rendering, not Payne's, which is remembered in the history of English poetry. It is fair to say that Payne was more a craftsman than an artist; the way in which he completed, in succession, translations of Villon, The 1001 Nights, The Decameron, Bandello, Rubayyat, Hafiz, together with an anthology of French poetry, indicates industriousness rather than creativity.

As the prefaratory note states, his 1001 Nights was: 'intended as purely literary work, produced with the sole object of supplying the general body of cultivated readers with a fairly representative and characteristic version of the most famous work of narrative fiction in existence.' (41). 42

It is this approach which is probably responsible for the merits of Payne's work. His version at least possesses the virtues of consistency and lucidity. He translated all of the poetry accurately, if not always in the original metre, and he did not expurgate the Arabic text. The explanatory notes he included, though few, are simple and to the point. The failings derive from another intention expressed in the preface: He wanted to make this translation 'a monument of noble English prose and verse'. This was a questionable aspiration since the original Nights

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(41) 42 Payne, The Book of .... I. pp. ix-x.

is anything but a monument of noble Arabic. Moreover, Payne's ideal of English prose and verse, influenced as it was by an enthusiasm for the culture of earlier periods, has a tendency to sound archaic and even stilted.

Payne's was the first complete translation of The Arabian Nights into English, and he and his publishers underestimated the demand for the work. An edition of 500 copies was printed, but the number of prospective purchasers reached 2000. Thus, 1500 would-be buyers were disappointed, and this provided the stimulus for Sir Richard Burton's translation: 'It seemed a pity to lose them,' Burton wrote. He asked Payne if he had any objection to his making a new translation, and Payne readily consented. (43)

Burton's first ten volumes were published in the years 1885 and 1886, and the six supplementary volumes followed between 1886 and 1888. His aim, as he himself set it out, was two-fold: firstly, he wished to give the closest word for word translation possible, and secondly, he wanted to create a repository for the anthropological information he had been gathering for years, and which he could not find an opportunity for publishing as articles.

Burton borrowed extensively from Payne's work, as has been demonstrated by Thomas Wright in 1906 and 1919, Macdonald in 1929

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43 Thomas Wright, The Life of Sir Richard Burton. 2 vols. (London, 1906), II. pp. 52, 53.

and 1938, and Littmann in 1953 (44) Nevertheless, as Mia Gerhardt points out, Burton's most recent biographers have not taken sufficient cognizance of the full extent of his debt (45) The romantic legend surrounding Burton and his exploits as explorer, adventurer, orientalist and enemy of Victorian morality, gives him a prestige which few other Arabists can compete with. He was certainly a far more colourful figure than Payne, and this fact has tended to obscure how much his translation of The Arabian Nights owed to Payne.

Burton's standing as a romantic hero still serves to make his Arabian Nights the most famous of all English translations. Just as people in the West mistakenly consider The Nights a classic of Arabic literature, when Arab scholars largely despise it, if they acknowledge it at all, so most English readers erroneously believe that Burton is the pre-eminent translator of The Nights. In actual fact, the chief distinction which his version can claim is that of being the most recent unabridged translation into English. The notes are long and represent a fascinating personal document, but they have little bearing on the work itself. As Mia Gerhardt writes:

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44 (43) Wright, The Life of R. Burton. II. Chapters 28 & 33.

Thomas, Wright, The Life of John Payne. (London, 1919).

D.B. Macdonald, "Thousand and One Nights", Encylopaedia Britanica. (14th edition, 1929).

Enno Littmann, "Alf Layla Wa-Layla", Encyclopaedia of Islam. New edition, (Leiden,, 1960), I. pp. 358-364.

45 (44) Gerhardt, The Art of .... p. 78.

"It is nct to be wondered at if his notes to the 1001 Nights have only a slight connection with the text: the real purpose of his lavish annotation is, unmistakably, self expression. His self portrait in notes may be considered as the most characteristic feature of Burton's translation, and gives it an interest of its own. But the 1001 Nights comes very near being used as the portrait's background. And when a translator blocks the view of the translated text, his work can hardly be considered a successful achievement. (45)

In Western culture, the idea of the East has always contained a strong element of legend, and Burton deserves every credit for both recognising this fact and capitalizing upon it in order to increase sympathies for the Islamic world. Yet, it must be remembered that his famous translation depends for its very existence on the work done by the comparatively neglected Payne. It was Payne, not Burton, who gave the English world its first unabridged version of The Nights translated directly from the original.

It can be seen that the field had widened considerably since the time when Galland's work was introduced to the English language. In fact, however, the new translations were often no improvement on the earlier piece of hack work. Perhaps the most telling comment on the later translations was made by A.J. Arberry, in the introduction to his Scheherzade: 'Earlier translations of Arabian Nights,' he remarks, referring to those by his countrymen,

> have almost without exception been so mesmerized by the stylistic peculiarities of Arabic that they have not hesitated to imitate them slavishly in their versions, a thing they would

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46 (45) Gerhardt, The Art of .... p. 93.

> probably have scorned to do, and been soundly schooled to avoid, were their task Homer or Herodotus or Horace or Livy. Not content with inventing a strange Eurasion sort of English, that was the more readily accpeted because it seemed profanely to echo the Old Testament in the authorized Version ... and for a good reason, the Semitic original of those Scriptures ... they went father than they needed to have done and, being caught up in the eddies of the Gothic Revival, imported into their diction all the bogus flummery of Ye Olde Englysshe. (46)

There is no doubt that Arberry is largely correct here. The colloquial Arabic of the original, with its concomitant qualities of simplicity and naturalness, calls for simple, direct language in the translation. Yet, the English versions are neither simple, conversational nor contemporary in language and style. Lane adopts a rather self consciously Biblical style, for example, while Payne's translation suffers from being too polished and lacking in spontaneity. He also employs archaic verb and pronoun forms as well as a rather complex sentence structure. (47) 48

It was the English translation of Galland's version, however, which first made an impact and made The Nights one of the most popular books of the early 18th century. Other translators then capitalized on its success, and it may be said that this work is, with the exception of the Hebrew Scriptures, the one oriental book that is almost universally known in the English speaking world. (48) 49

The reasons for the popularity of The Nights are not hard to discover. The whole unfamiliar world of the caliphates is brought to life;

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47 (46) Arberry, Scheherezade. pp. 9-10.

48 (47) Ibid. p. 15.

49 (48) Conant, Oriental Tale ..... p. 1.

all classes of Arabian society are represented and nothing is excluded on the grounds of being common, vulgar or unclean. Satire and sentiment, love and debauchery, wit and wisdom, uprightness and hypocrisy are all important elements, and they follow one another with great rapidity through its pages. Indeed, the establishment of contrasts is one of the keynotes of the book, in which childish simplicity and boyish mischief are sometimes the cloak for the highest view of life and character. Truths are often thrown into relief, paradoxically, by rough, broad or subtle humour, and value judgements can be discerned in what seems a voluptuous and irreligious picture. As Prof. Gibb says: 'Beneath their fantasy and exotic appeal there was a moral core, without which they could not have entered so deeply into the heart of Europe, nor have preserved for two centuries a place in the affection of both learned and simple.' (49) To Sir R. Burton, it is the element of strong contrast; 'which forms the chiefest charm of The Nights, which gives it the most striking originality, and which marks it as perfect exposition of the medieval Muslim mind.' (50) One of the main reasons for the popularity of The Nights and other products of orential fiction was their romantic character. The Nights is invested with 'romance', in the sense of "imaginative and psychological projection of the 'real' world." (51) The dominant themes are love and adventure, but their dramatic effect is enhanced by an abundance of magical and supernatural episodes couched in terms suggesting magnificence and

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50 (49) Gibb, The Legacy .... p. 203.

51 (50) Burton, The Book of .... I. 'foreword', xxvii.

52 (51) A Dictionary of Modern Critical Terms. ed. Roger Fowler, (London, 1973), 'Romance', p. 162.

pleasure. It is not surprising then, that in the early 18th century, English readers should find in these fascinating marvels, views through the veils of distance, what they believed to be the 'true spirit' of oriental romance.

Another important factor which prepared the way for the success of The Nights was the increase in the literate population of the country leading, as it did, to a rising demand for popular reading material. In this context, The Nights, possessed of the charm of pure adventure, could hardly fail to impress and achieve popular success. As in many adventure tales, adventures follow one another with kaleidoscopic rapidity, the only link being the presence of the hero. The chief appeal is to the reader's curiosity, the desire to know what happens next. Thus, in all the Sindbad tales, for example, the main emphasis is laid on events. However, the stories are raised above the level of many other adventure stories by the verisimilitude given to the exciting incidents by picturesque details. The characterization is frequently inadequate, but the brilliant background and rapid pace of adventure compensate for this.

The Arabian Nights abounds in examples of the fantastic and extravagant, and indeed, there is no distinction between the natural and supernatural in this world where everything is possible, and the unexpected must be expected. (53)

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(53) Conant, The Oriental Tale .... p.3.

Legend and fact, mythology and theology, as well as the social and religious traditions of the East are bound together, brilliantly coloured, and invested in varying measures with rich imagination. Exciting incidents are bound to occur: any dark, grim object, like a cloud or rock, has the potential to change into a formidable Jinn or a huge black giant with grotesque features and a thundering voice. Without regard for the conventions of time or space, the obedient 'slave of the lamp' can carry a sleeping prince a thousand leagues through the air, or, on another occasion, can build overnight a magnificent palace of dazzling splendour. Disguise and its use is one of the outstanding and peculiar features of the work: a gazelle or a serpent may be an enchanted fairy; a beautiful young woman may be a cruel old witch whose talisman will instantly transform humans into dogs or stones. Both aspects of magical unreality and exaggeration, the terrible and the beautiful, are present and equal in dominating the enchanted land that the tales portray.

It is now instructive to consider the early eighteenth century attitude towards The Nights, and its influence on some of the prominent writers of the age. It cannot be said that writers were very much influenced by the intricacies of

narrative technique displayed in The Nights, although there seems to have been some interest in the frame story form. More readily accepted were, on the one hand, exotic evocations of oriental culture, and on the other, the rapid narration of events with simplistically presented characters. Literature from 1700 to 1750 has often been seen as formal, critical and prosaic. However, it is now accepted by many scholars that beneath this outward crust, the fire of reactionary 'romantic spirit' was glowing. The Arabian Nights appealed to this new romantic spirit. When the subject matter of The Nights was discussed, the features which seem to have interested the people of the time were not those which now have distinct literary interest, but those which showed the work's value as moral instruction, as entertainment, and as a source of information about the exotic East. To the majority of English people in the early part of the eighteenth century, the orient was still mysterious, and it continued to exercise its habitual charm and fascination on all imaginative minds.

Not unexpectedly, given the fact that, despite smouldering romantic fires, the 18th century was still predominantly the age of Classicism, there was still a reaction against the wave of enthusiasm for The Nights and other oriental tales. Lord Shaftesbury, who despised oriental lore, was already of the opinion that even travel books on the barbarous areas like the Near East were monstrous, immoral and unchristian:

> What was first put into our hand when we were young, serves us afterwards for serious study and wise research when we are old ... Through a certain surfeit taken in a wrong kind of serious reading, we apply ourselves, with full content, to the most ridiculous. The more remote our pattern is from anything moral or profitable, the more freedom and satisfaction we find in it. We care not how Gothic or barbarous our models are, what ill-designed or monstrous figures we view, or what false proportions we trace or see described in history, romance, or fiction ... Atheists find that though Christian miracles may not so well satisfy them, they dwell with the highest contentment on the prodigies of Moorish and Pagan countries. They have far more pleasure in hearing the monstrous men and manners than the politest and best narrations of the affairs, the governments, and lives of the wisest and most polished people. (58)[54]

Characteristically, Shaftesbury drew no clear distinction here between the moral and the aesthetic.

Rev. J. Cooper's attitude towards oriental fiction offers another good example of the general outlook of the 'age of reason'. This outlook was characterized by a complete lack of sympathy with oriental life and thought, and led to misconception and misinterpretation. In his preface to The Oriental Moralist, he compared the collection to a neglected garden, having delightful flowers but also being full of weeds:

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(55)[54] Anthony Ashley Cooper, (3rd Earl of Shaftesbury), Characteristics of men, manners, opinions, times ... . 2 vols. in 1. ed. J.M. Kobertson, (New York, 1964).

> I have endeavoured to select a few of the most interesting tales, have given them a new dress in point of language, and have carefully expurgated everything that could give the least offence to the most delicate reader. Not satisifed barely with these views, I have added many moral reflections, wherever the story would admit of them. I have in many instances, considerably altered the fables, to promote the love of virtue, to fortify the youthful heart against the impressions of vice, and to point out to them the paths which lead to peace, happiness and honour. (56)[55]

This view typifies the spirit and method of English moralistic writers on the oriental tale: they repeatedly distorted facts and sought to mar all the genuine beauties of these richly imaginative tales.

The chief merit of The Nights, from the point of view of those not too prejudiced to appreciate it, was that it possessed a quality lacking in fairy tales. This quality was the 'sense of reality in the midst of unreality. Despite the profusion of exotic splendour, the sensational events and the unreality, the tales still seemed to rest on the solid ground of reality; the adventures were real adventures, told with great skill and an instinct for the dramatic. It was this quality which had the most distinct value in stimulating the imagination of writers, and the oriental world often became, in English literature, a metaphor for worlds of dream.

The appearance of The Arabian Nights prepared the minds of the reading public of Augustan England for further examples of the oriental tale. Other collections soon appeared, and they shared equally in the warm welcome and popularity enjoyed by The Nights. Imitations .

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(56) J. Cooper, The Oriental Moralist or The Beauties of The Arabian Nights Entertainments. (London, 1790).
Quoted from: Conant, The Oriental Tale .... pp. 108-109.

of oriental tales also became more popular, and a number of pseudo-oriental tales and collections appeared first in French, and were then translated into English. M.P. Conant believes that in the history of the novel a place should be reserved for the early translators of oriental fiction from French. Four of Thomas Simon Gueullette's (1683-1766) anthologies were translated into English. The first, Chinese Tales, was published in 1725, and a translation by Thomas Stackhouse appeared in 1781. The Mogul Tales was published in 1736, and the Tartarian Tales in 1759. Finally, there was Peruvian Tales in 1764, but this last collection is virtually without value, as it is pseudo-oriental in everything except setting. It is interesting only as an example of an ultra-fantastic, decadent oriental tale. There is one piece of inadvertent humour in this work, when the author lends local colour to the terrors of Peru by mentioning 'muskettas, reptiles, and other insects.' (57)[56]

The major collection of Chinese tales produced by Gueullette became so popular in England that they were accepted as part of English literature. The overall plan of each collection was obviously modelled on The Arabian Nights, especially that for Tartarian Tales, which is subtitled A Thousand and One Quarters of Hours. The subtitle refers to the frame story and to the duration of the tales; which were narrated in order to solve a particular problem. As in The Arabian Nights, the short plot in the frame story serves to link the huge number of otherwise unrelated tales. The

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56 (57) Conant, The Oriental Tale .... p. 32.

tales were told in one thousand and one quarters of an hour, in order to divert the attention of the Tartarian king while he waited for his physician to return from a long journey in search of a cure for the king's blindness.

The frame story in these works leads on to a collection of fantastic individual tales which ~~contribute~~ constitute the main body of the work. In The Chinese Tales or The Wonderful Adventures of Mandarin Fum-Hoam, the frame story of the princess of Georgia, Gulchernaz, leads to a conversation on the subject of persons who change their faith as a condition of marriage. The Chinese Sultan invites Gulchernaz to listen to tales about transmigration of souls told by his mandarin, Fum-Hoam, in order to convince her of the validity of belief in this phenomenon. She accepts the invitation, but imposes a condition that, if the tales fail to convince her, the sultan will agree to become converied to Mahometanism. The highlights of the work lie in the far-fetched tales of transmigration. The mandarin Fum-Hoam, claims to have undergone many metempsychoses, including those into a dog, a flea and then a bat, and he describes each in ostentatious detail. These are also descriptions of various kinds of magic, such as the turning of base metal into gold.

The ending of the Chinese Tales is the reverse of the outcome in The Arabian Nights or the Tartarian Tales, in that these conlude with the intended purpose achieved, whereas the Chinese Tales do not. The mandarin, whose name in Chinese means phoenix, the mystic bird which burns itself at the age of 500 years and then arises from the ashes, turns out to be the brother of the Georgian princess, and he betrays the sultan.

His tales fail to impress the princess, and the Sultan is thus forced into accepting Mahometanism. The ending displays the author's hatred of what he regards as the superstitious belief in transmigration prevailing amongst the Chinese, and shows the victory of Mahometanism over it.

The Chinese Tales also have a moralizing element. For example, there is the poetical fancy common in Persian literature:

> That even in the palace of the king is but an inn, for its successive inhabitants are but travellers upon earth toward the same common end, - death; and equally familiar figure in which life is composed to a game of chess, some act kings, the queens, the knights, the fools, and simple pawns. There is a vast difference between them, while they are in motion; but when once the game is over, the chess-board shut, they are all thrown promiscuously together in the same box, without any sort of distinction, all then become equal; and there is nothing but our good works and charity towards our neighbours, that will give us the superiority. (58)[57]

The moralizing element is, in fact, even stronger in The Tartarian Tales and the Mogul Tales. The dedication of The Tartarian Tales to the Duke of Chartres, makes the author's intentions quite clear: 'The book ... is ... of those which are improving as well as entertaining. Though the subject appear light, yet it conduces to something useful on account of the morality couched in it.' (59)[58]

Similarly, the prefatory essay in The Mogul Tales entitled "Discourses on the Usefulness of Romances", hints at moral aims.

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57 (58) Conant, The Oriental Tale .... pp. 35-36.
cf, Spectator, No. 289.

58 (59) Thomas E. Gueullette, The Tartarian Tales, or A Thousand and One Quarters of An Hour. (London, 1759). Dedication to the Duke of Chartres.

In this latter collection of stories, the intrusion of a Circassian beauty ruins the contented and harmonious life of a sultan and his three Sultanas in the district of Guzaratte in the Mogul Empire. The Sultan is later punished for his folly, however, by the onset of remorse and distress, especially when he realizes the extent of the sultanas' love for him. Gueullette's tales, modelled on The Arabian Nights, are written in a style which emphasizes incredible events, vivid fantasy, and the power of magic. The strange customs, manners, behaviour and climates embodied in the tales provide special appeal. In the 18th century, The Tartarian Tales was generally regarded as being the best of the three. It apparently gave delight to Swift, which he expressed in his letter (XL) to Stella, and: 'The adventures of the physician Abu Bakkr' in The Tartarian Tales has been claimed by Eugene E. Rovillain as the prototype for Swift's 'A Voyage to Lilliput' in Gulliver's Travels. (59)

Two other oriental collections, The Persian Tales and The Turkish Tales, were also translated by a French Savant, Pétis de la Croix, and later revised by Le Sage. These translations were published soon after the first appearance of Galland's work, and were undoubtedly a result of its popularity. The Turkish Tales was translated from French into English in 1708, and appeared again in 1714 in another version, entitled The Persian and Turkish Tales Compleat (sic) ... (60) In fact, however,

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(59) Eugene E. Rovillain, "Jonathan Swift's A Voyage to Lilliput and The Thousand and One Quarters of An Hour, Tartarian Tales of Thomas Simon Gueulette", Modern Language Notes (Baltimore, 1929), pp. 362-364.

(60) The Persian and the Turkish Tales Compleat (sic), Translated formerly from those languages into French. (or rather compiled) by M. Pétis de la Croix ... (assisted by A.R. Le Sage) and now into English(sic) from that translation by Dr. King, and several other hands. (London, 1714).

these tales were no more than a new version of the famous Oriental Middle English romance of the Seven Sages of Rome, the Old book of Sindebar, or the Greek Syntipas of the 12th century. In England, especially since most of the collections appeared as translations from French, it became increasingly difficult for readers to distinguish between the genuinely oriental tales and domestic imitations introduced when the supply of genuine material ran short. This was probably one of the obstacles which prevented accurate critical consideration of the genre.

The Turkish Tales consists of several extraordinary adventures and stories relating to the history of a certain Sultaness of Persia. Queen Canzade was possessed of an evil passion for her stepson, and this passion turned to hatred when he rejected her love and her scheme to murder the king. The prince is bound to forty days silence for fear of a mysterious calamity predicted by his tutor. The latter meanwhile, to avoid questions, retires discretely into a cave. Canzade persuades the King to decree the prince's death, but the forty viziers plead for him in turn, telling the stories of a wicked woman and loyal sons. The queen then endeavours to win her way by means of tales involving evil viziers and murderous princes, until finally the tutor is found, the prince justified and the Queen condemned to death in his stead. The Turkish Tales differ from The Persian Tales, in that the stories lack elaborate descriptions. This absence of description, focuses attention on the plot, thereby enabling the characters to appear more distinctly. A happy result was that some of the tales provided admirable dramatic narratives.

Next to The Arabian Nights, The Persian Tales probably represent the most important oriental influence on English literature and thought in the 18th century, and, as was often the case, this influence came through French writers. At this stage in the history of English literature interest in French literature was probably at its highest, and this interest was shown at a time when French writers were, themselves, deeply influenced by oriental fiction, as is witnessed by the work of Voltaire, Bigon and Pétis de la Croix. The Persian Tales's first appearance in a European language was in French between the years 1710 and 1712, and this French work is generally thought to be the responsibility of Pétis de la Croix and a collaborator. Pétis de la Croix had also been responsible for the appearance in French of Turkish Tales, but he and his publishers obviously intended The Persian Tales as a companion work to The Arabian Nights, for it was entitled Mille et un Jour, a name which survived as a sub-title in Ambrose Philips's version: Persian Tales: The Thousand and One Days, which appeared in 1714. (62) In Geoffrey Tillotson's view, Ambrose Philips was probably the earliest translator of the work into English:

> The first date I have been able to discover for Philips's translation is 1714: the Bodleian Catalogue (1843) includes an edition of this date. Lowndes and 'D.N.B.' give the impossible date 1709. Another translation, the preface of which mentions Philipis's translation as just published, came out in 1714, and was the work of 'the late learned Dr. King, and several other Hands.'

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(62) Ambrose Philips (trans), The Thousand and One Days: Persian Tales. 7th edition, 2 vols. (London, 1765).

Philips's translation, according to title-page evidence, was reprinted for the second time in 1722, for the sixth 1750, again in 1783 and lastly in 1848. In 1892 J.H. McCarthy, who had come upon Pétis de la Croix accidentally, re-translated the tales. He considered them almost unknown in England, having only met with a 1714 edition of King's translation and a 1738 one of Philips's which he took to be the first. (63)62

Philips's translation was followed by numerous later editions, as is evident from Victor Chauvin, and as is testified to in the preface to the 1767 re-issue of another version originally dated 1714, by 'Dr. King and several other hands. (64)63 There was clearly much popular demand for the oriental material found in this work.

The structure of The Persian Tales is basically similar to that of The Arabian Nights. In each work there is a series of stories, introduced and linked together by a frame story. In The Arabian Nights, the central figure in the frame story was a Sultan who had lost his faith in women, and in The Persian Tales, the central character is the princess of Casmire, who was the only daughter of the king. She was so beautiful that people thronged round to gaze at her, in spite of guards who wounded and even killed many of them. Farruknaz, this much desired princess, had a belief, as unshakeable as it was eccentric, that all men were unfaithful, and repaid the tenderness of women with ingratitude. This aversion to men resulted from a dream she had once had. She had seen a stag caught in a trap, and released from it by a doe. However, not long afterwards

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(63)62 Geoffrey Tillotson, Essays in Criticism and Research. (Cambridge, 1942), p. 112.

(64)63 Victor Chauvin, Bibliographie des ouvrage Arabes ou relatifs aux Arabes, publies dans L'Europe Chretienne de 1810 a 1885. 12 vols. (Liege, 1892-1922), N. pp. 123-124. n. 2.

Persian and Turkish Tales. (London, 1767), II. Title page & preface.

the doe fell into the same trap, and instead of releasing her, the stag simply abandoned her. Farruknaz constantly refused the requests of numerous princes who asked for her hand, and her father, who was bound by a promise she had earlier managed to extract from him, could not give her in marriage without her consent. In despair of ever persuading his daughter to accept anyone as her husband, he confided in her old nurse. She undertook to cure the princessof her fear by telling her a series of tales designed to prove to her that faithful men do exist in the world. The nurse told the tales each day for a thousand and one days, but the stubbornly sceptical princess merely criticized and found fault with each hero presented to her. She did finally marry the prince of Persia, but not as a result of any of the tales which had been designed to influence her. The persuasion was effected rather by the magic powers and religious authority of the holy dervish.

The exact origin of The Persian Tales is open to some question, as D.B. Macdonald has shown. (65)[64] It has been possible, in the case of The Arabian Nights, to trace some oriental originals from which the European translations were made, but this is not the case with the Persian Tales, and it was at one time believed that Pétis de la Croix invented the tales himself, in collaboration with his friend Le Sage. Pétis de la Croix claimed that the work was a translation of a manuscript owened by a Persian friend of his, Dervish Moclés of Isfahan.

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64 (65) Macdonald, A Bibliographical ... . p. 415.

He also claimed that Moclés knew of a large number of stories in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish, called Al Faraj Ba' d Al Shidda (Relief from 'After' Affliction). As no Persian volume of such description has ever been found, it seems likely that Pétis probably took most of his materials from a Turkish manuscript of the same name, and added to them some stories of Persian and Indian origin, and one or two of his own creation.

There are a number of differences between The Persian Tales and The Arabian Nights, but these differences arise largely from an exaggeration in The Persian Tales of features of which were already present in The Arabian Nights. It is as though the author were seeking to ensure the presence of elements which he deemed responsible for the commercial success of The Arabian Nights. In consequence, The Persian Tales were more extravagant than The Arabian Nights: scenes of beauty or horror are far more lavishly described; the exotic background receives greater emphasis; there is not the homely background of reality to which The Arabian Nights always returned; and sentimentality is given a fuller rein.

Despite these exaggerations in the later work, the similarities are very striking. Both collections were intended to transport the reader into a land of magic and enchantment, and away from the realities of Eighteenth-century Europe. Yet, the setting for the tales was not wholly unreal: the Eastern names possessed a magic of their own because of their unfamiliarity, and the stories were full of strange adventures, but the scenes presented were real places and the customs described were true oriental customs. Also, in neither The Arabian Nights nor The Persian

Tales, is the urge to present the unreal and the unfamiliar the result of an escapist impulse. It was felt that the setting of these tales was ideal as a background for the representation of moral issues. These moral issues could be expressed with most clarity and universality in a context with which the readers were not familiar. People's prejudices and ideas rooted in their own material interests could be by-passed if the material in the stories had nothing in common with their everyday lives. There was, of course, the problem of inducing people to make an association between morality accepted in the context of unreal or at least unfamiliar settings and their own attitudes and actions. However, eighteenth-century writers still seemed to believe the method advantageous.

> The art of making oriental tales a vehicle for the expression of eighteenth-century ideas necessarily wrought changes in the tales themselves, and these changes illustrate the ability of many writers of this time to domesticate the strange and remote. The writers responsible for the appearance of oriental tales in the West changed the story frames, introduced different kinds of plot and reduced local colour and social details relating to the East. The result was often a vague exotic setting, serving the familiar purpose in story telling of the 'far away and long ago.'

This loss of many original features of the tales may be found in both the French versions and in the later English ones, and in each case this was almost certainly due to the classical tastes and classical rules accepted in the eighteenth century; literature had to respond to the unalterable demands of reason, order and good sense; it had to 'hold the mirror up to nature,' (65), and had to maintain a strict moral decorum. This being the case, the whole range of translated oriental fiction had to undergo a metamorphosis, and the huge mass of pseudo-oriental fiction which resulted from the impact of the exotic tales on romantic and Neo-Classicist writers alike was directed to eighteenth-century ideals. Only if it attained conformity with the literary standards of the day would it be acceptable. Like Galland, and almost echoing his words, Ambrose Philips informed his readers that, as:

> farther recommendations of his work and in justice to the French author ... there is nothing in the whole cast of these stories which tends towards the corrupting of the heart, or overthrowing of any moral or religious duties: on the contrary, the most exalted notions of virtue, and accomplishments of life, are everywhere insulted in the most engaging manner. (66)

He also specifies that, 'The characters and passions, together with the sentiments, are taken from nature; so that every tale, separately considered, may be looked upon as a little epic poem, which wants only the addition of numbers.' (67)

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(65) William Shakespeare, Hamlet. ed. K. Grose, (London, 1969), III, ii, Line: 19.

(66) Philips, Persian Tales. p. iv.

(67) Ibid.

It was only in forms such as these that the eighteenth-century imagination 'felt itself free' as Tillotson described it, 'to shuffle on a Persian coat and to dilate itself at ease in fable or fantasy.' (68) Writers' romantic imaginations could be allowed access to a work of visions only in the interest of moral instruction, and thus, romantic enchantment and moral teaching became complementary. This fact is well illustrated by the figure of Alexander Pope. Tillotson describes how Pope told Spence that he had some thoughts of writing a Persian fable which would have been a 'wild thing.' (69) He also quotes from Pope's letter to Judith Cowper of 26 September, 1723, in which Pope confessed that he 'had an inclination to tell a fairy tale, the more wild and exotic the better; therefore a vision, which is confined to no rules of probability, will take in all the variety and luxuriancy of description you will; provided there be an apparent moral to it. I think, one or two of the Persian tales would give one hints for such an invention ..' (70) He wanted the tales to be wild, exotic, improbable, and full of variety and luxuriancy of description; yet there had, also to be an apparent moral.

In 1742, nineteen years after Pope wrote this letter, the young William Collins published his four Persian Eclogues, written three years before, when the poet was only seventeen. The poems, which were later re-entitled Oriental Eclogues, are in heroic

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(68) Tillotson, Essays .... p. 111.

(69) Ibid. p. 112.

(70) Ibid. p. 112.

couplets, and there is very little which is either Persian or Oriental about them, although all four have ostensibly eastern subjects. In the first, a Persian poet addresses shepherds and shepherdesses on the theme of virtue. In the second, a camel driver, crossing a perilous desert, decides that it is better to abandon ideas of wealth and go back to his mistress. The third tells of the marriage of a King of Persia with a shepherdess and of her nostalgia for the pastoral life, while, in the fourth, two shepherds flee from the invading Tartars. Despite exciting the admiration of Oliver Goldsmith, the Eclogues are not among Collins' best work, and they represent a negligible contribution to the spread of a taste for the oriental.

A much more telling case is that of Pope's contemporary, Joseph Addison. Here we can see how an oriental setting could attract a moral essayist who, already steeped in classical illustration, wanted to find new garments with which to clothe his arguments. In the Spectator of June 18, 1711, (71) for example, Addison takes two episodes from 'the Turkish tales' to illustrate his thesis concerning the origin of our sense of duration from which in turn, he argues, we can deduce the wisest method of using our time. His explicit purpose in selecting these Turkish tales is the avoidance of well beaten subjects which have been 'the Topicks of many other Writers.' Addison aims in preference to be fresh by indulging himself in a 'Speculation that is more uncommon, and may therefore perhaps be more entertaining.'

For illustration, he first quotes from Locke and Mallebranche

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(71) J.Addison, Works, ed. R.Hurd (1864), II, pp.415-19.

to indicate the philosophical conception of duration according to which our sense of time supposedly depends upon the rate of succession of our ideas. The main part of his essay, however, relates the stories of Mahomet's night journey under the direction of Gabriel recorded in the Alcoran, and of the Egyptian Sultan who, at first sceptical of the Mahomet's account, has a similar experience under the guidance of one of his royal advisers. While both these stories certainly have the recommendation of novelty to Addison's readers, we may perhaps infer a further purpose, for by choosing two stories which so neatly complement each other Addison anticipates his readers' reactions and through the exposure of the Sultan's scepticism may answer in advance his disbelieving reader's objections.

There is another implicit point of contrast between the two stories: while the first is more comfortably miraculous - the Mahomet returns to his still warm bed in good time to catch an overturned pitcher before it spills its contents - the second is more down to earth. To enter upon his vision, the Sultan has to perform an ordinary and rather ridiculous action, bending down to a 'huge Tub of Water' before all the eyes of his advisers. (The ritual significance of this action as a cleansing of body and mind begins to emerge only later.) The Sultan's imaginary life too includes many tests and inconveniences; he has no choice but to set out to discover a means of livelihood in the strange country in which he suddenly finds himself, and though at last marrying and fathering a large family he also experiences a period of great want when he is reduced to the humblest forms of employment. Even the manner of the Sultan's return to his former self is also calculated to remind the reader of mundane realities:

Addison sounds a contemporary note of distrust of enthusiasm when he describes how the Sultan, walking alone one day by the sea-side, was 'seized with many melancholy Reflections upon his former and present State of Life, which had raised a Fit of Devotion in him' so that 'he threw off his Clothes with a Design to wash himself, according to the Custom of the Mahometans, before he said his Prayers.' No sooner does he raise his head above the water than he finds himself standing once more by the side of the tub.

Addison aims characteristically here as much to instruct as to amuse: according to his conclusion, the Wise Man is he who knows how to 'extend Life beyond its natural Dimensions' by distinguishing 'every Moment of it with useful and amusing Thought.' Addison's final comparison between the Fool for whom recollection of his past life is like a barren vista 'with nothing either profitable or ornamental,' and the Wise Man to whom 'the View of past Life' appears a 'beautiful and spacious Landskip, divided into delightful Gardens, green Meadows, fruitful Fields...' also extends the contrast fundamental to the whole essay which as a series of contrasts - two pieces of philosophy, two Turkish tales, the Wise Man and the Foolish Man - enacts the mode of judgment advocated throughout: that reasoned balance of mind with which alone may we combine the useful and the amusing, tempering always our enjoyment of the easy and the marvellous with the recognition of the struggle and effort necessary to everyday existence.

Addison returns to an oriental source a few months later when, in the Spectator of September 1, 1711, (72) he offers his readers

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(72) Works, ed. Hurd, II, pp. 499-503.

a translation of part of 'The Visions of Mirzah' which he claims to have recently found amongst 'several Oriental Manuscripts' in Cairo. Again Addison's handling of the material encourages the reader to strike a balance between the marvellous and the rational. The passage relating Mirzah's first vision opens with Mirzah's ascent of the 'Hills of Bagdat in order to pass the rest of the Day in Meditation and Prayer.' But while Mirzah is airing himself on the tops of the mountains and indulging a profound contemplation upon the vanity of human life, there suddenly appears a figure dressed in shepherd's clothing and playing most beautifully upon a musical instrument. Though the music of this genius of the place melts Mirzah's heart into 'secret Raptures,' the shepherd's smile, combining 'Compassion and Affability,' establishes contact between them, familiarising him to Mirzah's imagination.

The vision which the genius then shows Mirzah also combines elements of the marvellous and the mundane, of joy and sorrow, of reward and retribution. At the genius's prompting, Mirzah first discerns a 'huge Valley, and a prodigious Tide of Water rolling through it' which he learns symbolise the Vale of Misery and the Tide of Eternity. Human Life is represented by a bridge across which multitudes try to pass but are frequently pulled down through innumerable trapdoors. The bridge appears a 'wonderful Structure' with its 'great Variety of Objects,' yet Mirzah can only be saddened by the evident fate of human beings, many of whom fall, it seems, in the very middle of 'Mirth and Jollity' or, while looking up to Heaven, 'in the midst of a Speculation stumbled and fell out of Sight.'

But saddening as this prospect is clearly meant to be, the

genius is at once careful to restore the balance of Mirzah's mind. Seeing that Mirzah was indulging himself in this melancholy prospect, he urges him to turn his gaze upwards to note the birds of destruction which symbolise the ignoble passions, and hearing Mirzah's exclamation at the burden of human misery and mortality this scene represents he again redirects Mirzah's attention. He bids him scan the far end of the valley where Mirzah now finds his eyes can penetrate the mist - whether by 'any supernatural force' or mere dissipation of the mist he cannot tell - and here he descries an enormous ocean half studded with fertile islands inhabited by 'Persons dressed in glorious Habits with Garlands upon their Heads.' The contrasting happiness of this scene pleases Mirzah though the genius is quick to remind him that this is the place mankind reaches only after death. The genius emphasizes the positive force of this symbolic prospect, demanding of Mirzah, 'Are not these, O Mirzah, Habitations worth contending for?' Turning to his guide to enquire further, however, Mirzah finds himself suddenly alone and in front of him, instead of the marvellous valley, lies the 'long hollow Valley of Bagdat, with Oxen, Sheep, and Camels grazing upon the Sides of it.' Thus the piece ends perfectly in character, maintaining a careful balance between the imaginary and the mundane, in order to suggest that the true use of vision is the freshly resolved improvement of immediate human life here below.

Addison's next use of oriental material occurs in the Spectator of November 13, 1712, (73) where his introductory description of the story, 'an Arabian fable...translated into French

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(73) J.Addison, Works, ed. R.Hurd (1864), IV, pp. 55-60.

by Monsieur Galland,' as a piece remarkable for its 'wild but natural simplicity,' suggests again his concern to recommend that which will both amuse and instruct, the 'wild' element in the oriental fable serving but to enhance the readers' understanding of the 'natural'. Addison intends the tale to illustrate the thesis that hope employed upon temporal objects lying at a great distance before us is only vain and foolish because the 'shortness and uncertainty of our time here makes such a kind of hope unreasonable and absurd.' The fable tells of a lazy man called Alnaschar who tries to multiply his paternal inheritance by setting himself up as a glass-man with the money of his inheritance pleasingly displayed in a variety of glass containers. His behaviour becomes even more Quixotic as he indulges himself in extravagant dreams of his imminent success and Addison clearly enjoys the story's ending which, with quiet but pungent wit, enforces the moral. At the wild climax of Alnaschar's dream, he imagines himself spurning his young wife with his foot and so completely is he swallowed up in this chimerical vision that he kicks out in reality with his foot, smashing all his glassware into minute fragments.

Humour is also important in Addison's use of another 'little wild Arabian tale' which he relates in the Guardian of September 16, 1713 (74) to illustrate the advantages of a balanced frame of mind as the necessary basis for the social virtue of complaisance. Again the reader is enjoined implicitly to balance the imaginary with the real so that he may discover, for example, that very often such inner unease arises as much from 'imaginary distresses' as from 'the more real pains and calamities of life.' This realisation he may obtain, argues Addison, through the practice of complaisance which Addison defines as 'a constant endeavour to

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(74) Works, ed. Hurd, pp. 312-5.

please those whom we converse with as far as we may do it innocently.' Addison assumes here that living at ease with onself and at ease with others are mutually dependent.

The tale concerns Schacabac's visit to a noble Barmecide in Persia. Being very poor and hungry, Schacabac is especially eager to test the Barmecide's famous hospitality. The Barmecide, however, is also well known for his sense of humour and he proceeds to try his guest, inviting his appreciation for a whole succession of choice but quite imaginary dishes. It is only after Schacabac has replied with equally humorous enthusiasm, clearly showing his willingness to accommodate himself to his host's humour, that the Barmecide at last invites him to share this marvellous meal in reality, placing before him the rice-soup, the goose and the pistachio lamb which before he had set in front of him only in imagination.

In emphasizing Addison's concern to recommend to his readers a proper balance between the wild and the natural, the marvellous and the real, the imagination and the reason, we should not neglect Addison's considerable success in engaging his readers' interest afresh through the novelty of his oriental material and through in particular the inclusion of picturesque and telling detail. This is very apparent in Addison's retelling of the story of Alnareschin in the Guardian of September 22, 1713. (75) This Arabian tale relates the ingenious attempts of Helim, physician to the Persian king, Alnareschin, to protect his beautiful daughter Balsora, from the king's flattering but invariably fatal attentions. Helim is so successful that eventually Balsora is able to marry the royal prince, Abdullah, whom she loves and who, after his father's

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(75) Works, ed. Hurd, pp. 325-31.

death, is happily reconciled to his elder brother now ruling in the belief that Abdullah is dead.

While the happy ending has an obvious moral rightness, Addison's reader is probably intended to enjoy the tale as much for the detail and vividness of its descriptions, such as those of the Black Palace, of Helim's stratagem to gain the freedom of the young prince and Balsora, and of Mount Khacan which Abdullah plants and cultivates with such skill and devotion that the area has ever since been called the garden of Persia. And, if moral adjuration is never far from Addison's purpose, his sensitive handling of these Arabian tales suggests abundantly that appreciation of variety and vitality which his morality implicitly sought to recommend to the freshened perception of his readers.

Samuel Johnson, like Addison, also uses oriental material in some of his occasional moral essays, but while he evidently enjoys, like Addison, the novelty of the eastern setting and the opportunity to combine the amusing with the instructive, he often seems to associate oriental splendour, not with a reinvigorated perception, but with the oppression of a restless and discontented imagination. In this we hear echoes of that 'dangerous prevalence of the imagination' which threatens to upset the balance of reasoned judgement in Rasselas.

In the earliest examples from The Rambler, like Mediocrity: A Fable (No.38) and Obidah, the son of Abensina (No.65), both of 1750, Johnson's use of eastern names and settings is little more than a superficial embellishment to a moral tale. The first, which is actually an appendix to a general statement, takes place during a drought in India, when two shepherds are granted a wish.

Both choose water: the first a moderate amount, but the second, in his overweening ambition, asks that the Ganges should cross his lands, which are at once destroyed, while he himself is washed away and eaten by a crocodile. In the second tale, Obidah, crossing the plains of Indostan, leaves the main way and takes a 'primrose path' from which he is eventually turned back by a hermit.

A third tale (No.120), dating from 11 May 1751, is more genuinely involved with its exotic setting. It tells the story of Almamoulin, son of Nouradin, who inherits a fortune on his father's death, and who attempts to find pleasure, at first by lavish expenditure, then by other means, all described in some detail. Eventually, he meets a philosopher, who tells him that riches will not bring wisdom, pleasure or friends, but that, used sensibly and rationally, they do have a use in helping others:

> This they will enable thee to perform, and this will afford the only happiness ordained for our present state, the confidence of divine favour, and the hope of future rewards. (76)

The relation of this story to the theme of Rasselas is clear, and Rambler No.190, dating from 11 January 1752, takes up a similar subject. Morad, a great man living in Agra, dies advising his son Abouzaid to avoid earthly vanity. Abouzaid tries to use his money to win the good opinion of others, but inevitably fails. He therefore decides that he will now do good for its own sake only.

Rambler Nos.204 and 205, published on 29 February and 3 March 1752, are even closer to Rasselas in subject than

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(76) S.Johnson, Works, (1787), VI,319.

No.120. Here Johnson tells of Seged, Lord of Ethiopia, who retreats to a paradise island in order to enjoy ten days of perfect happiness. His failure to do so, despite having every luxury and entertainment at hand, is again shown to be inevitable, and the experiment ends with the death of his daughter, an intrusion of genuine grief into an artificial world.

Johnson's reaction to the idea of exotic pleasures in these latter three tales reflects an uneasiness which is probably partly personal in origin. Johnson's essay incorporating the story of Gelaleddin in The Idler of September 22, 1759, (77) for example, has, by the author's own admission, a close link with his personal experience. Johnson once remarked that he 'had his own outset into life in his eye when he wrote the eastern story of Gelaleddin.' (78)

Though Gelaleddin, a young scholar, achieves considerable success at Bassora, one of the leading schools of learning in Persia, he decides to turn down the post of professor and to return to his native city of Tauris where, confident of his success in many other fields, he hopes to increase his acclaim. However, he is disappointed. Away from the university he finds people have quite different concerns: skill in disputation and bookish learning seem quite irrelevant to people whose first need is to overcome their poverty and even the visiers consider him ill prepared for public business. To make matters worse, Gelaleddin discovers on his return to Bassora that he is now regarded there with similar indifference 'as a fugitive, who

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(77) The Idler and Adventurer, ed.W.J.Bate, J.M.Bullitt and L.F.Powell, (Yale, 1963), pp.232-5.

(78) Miscellanies, ed.G.B.Hill (1897), I, p.178.

returned only because he could live in no other place.'

Discontent is even closer to the heart of Johnson's version of the story of Ortogrul of Basra in The Idler of March 8, 1760.(79) We see Ortogrul at the opening of the story wandering along the streets of Bagdat, 'musing on the varieties of merchandize which the shops offered to his view, and observing the different occupations which busied the multitudes on every side.' The sudden appearance of the chief visier, newly returned from the divan, turns Ortogrul's thoughts to another source of variety and wealth, the royal palace itself. Gaining entrance there, he 'surveyed the spaciousness of the apartments, admired the walls hung with golden tapestry, and the floors covered with silken carpets, and despised the simple neatness of his own little habitation.' Through Ortogrul's description of the palace's endless scenes of pleasure, we can sense perhaps Johnson's own feeling for the irresistible sensual appeal of the East. 'What can mortals hope or imagine,' Ortogrul wonders, 'which the master of this palace has not obtained? The dishes of luxury cover his table, the voice of harmony lulls him in his bowers; he breathes the fragrance of the groves of Java, and sleeps upon the down of the cygnets of Ganges.' But this contemplation only increases Ortogrul's self-discontent and he determines to become rich in the hope that only by so doing will he be able to escape the wretched fate of the man 'who lives with his own faults and follies always before him, and who has none to reconcile him to himself by praise and veneration.'

The seductiveness of the East continues to disturb him

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(79) Idler and Adventurer, pp.302-5.

while he tries to 'deliberate how he should grow rich,' so that we find 'he sometimes purposed to offer himself as a counsellor to one of the kings of India, and sometimes resolved to dig for diamonds in the mines of Golconda.' But he invariably falls victim to the 'violent fluctuation of opinion.' From such an uneasy state of mind Gelaleddin passes into a dream in which he is searching for someone to teach him how to grow rich. As in Addison's use of the setting of the visions of Mirzah, the mountainous location of Ortogrul's dream seems to carry both positive and negative implications. From such a point of elevation, the moralist seems to be saying, we can see further and more clearly but only at the risk of distancing ourselves from common necessities. Ortogrul finds himself facing uncompromising choices. Down the opposite mountain falls a roaring torrent, while in the valley below rises a small rivulet from a well. At Ortogrul's wish that 'the golden stream be quick and violent' on the opposite slope the torrent suddenly dries up and entirely disappears, but the rivulet remains. Though he accordingly decides 'to grow rich by silent profit, and persevering industry,' his intent seems to have lost little of its obsessive and self-deluded quality.

Ortogrul perceives his delusion only after, once grown rich, he discovers the persistence of his self-discontent. Acute enough to see through the flattery of his sympathisers, he cannot escape his own self-denigration: 'His own heart told him its frailties, his own understanding reproached him with his faults. How long, said he, with a deep sigh, have I been labouring in vain to amass wealth which at last is useless. Let no man heareafter wish to be rich, who is already too wise to be flattered.'

In 1759, the year in which he wrote 'Gelaleddin', Johnson also published his Rasselas: Prince of Abyssinia. Rasselas tells the story of a prince who, weary of the cloying joys of the 'happy valley of Abyssinia', where the inhabitants know only 'the soft vicissitudes of pleasure and repose' escapes into Egypt, accompanied by his sister, Nekayah, and a much travelled old philosopher, Imlac. In quest of happiness, Rasselas and Nekayah, under the guidance of Imlac, survey manners and the various conditions of men's lives. Despite a diligent search, they discover nothing but misery everywhere, and the whole company unanimously agrees to pronounce the phrase from Ecclesiastes, 'Vanity of Vanities'. Finally, in a conclusion where nothing is resolved, they all decide to return to Abyssinia.

It is well-known that Rasselas was written in haste, at the time of the final illness of Johnson's mother, so that Johnson is unlikely to have re-consulted source material at the time of writing. His decision to set the story in Africa (the setting is not the east, as some writers have implied), may have been partly prompted by memories of Father Jeronymo Lobo's Voyage to Abyssinia of which Johnson's English translation (from a French version) was published in 1735. Some of Johnson's background material for Rasselas was evidently derived from Lobo, but D.M.Lockhart (80) has convincingly established that Johnson was also familiar with other works on Abyssinia, among them Job Ludolf's Historia Aethiopica of 1681, Charles Jacques Poncet's Voyage en Ethiopie of 1704, and Luis de Urreta's Historia de la Ethiopia of 1610. In the two Rambler essays on 'Seged, Lord of Ethiopia' referred to above, Johnson had already used related material to trace a similar

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(80) D.M.Lockhart, '"The Fourth Son of the Mighty Emperor": The Ethiopian Background of Johnson's Rasselas', PMLA, lxxviii (1963), pp.526-7.

theme, although Seged's retreat could be seen to represent a movement in the opposite direction from Rasselas's determination to leave the happy valley and try the outside world.

In Rasselas, Imlac describes his journey from Abyssinia through Surat, Agra, Mecca, Palestine, Asia and Cairo. As in the later story of Pekuah, the maid who is abducted, this use of a framed narrative is typical of the eastern tale. Imlac's journey parallels that of Rasselas, since it teaches him a great deal, but does not bring him happiness. Johnson's own view of travel as a means of education was recorded by Boswell: 'He talked with an uncommon animation of travelling into distant countries; that the mind was enlarged by it, and that an acquisition of dignity of character was derived from it'. (81)

The details of Imlac's journey are, on the whole lightly sketched, but there are a few passages which recall Johnson's extensive reading among travel writers. Speaking of Mecca, for example, Imlac says that he was able to 'repeat by memory the volumes that are suspended in the mosque'. (82) These seven volumes were the Muallakat, the seven 'golden' poems, dating from the sixth century, which had become a pattern of excellence. Conversely, Johnson's account of the journey of Rasselas and his companions from Abyssinia to Suez and Cairo suggests a lack of knowledge or of interest in the facts of the terrain, which it would have been impossible to cover 'by easy journey'. In the same way, in Chapter XIX, Johnson describes the party covering the four hundred miles from Cairo to Assuan in three

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(81) James Boswell, Life of Johnson, ed. G.B.Hill (Oxford, 1934), III, p.269.

(82) Rasselas, ed. J.P.Hardy (Oxford, 1968), p.25.

days of pleasant and pastoral wanderings, another evident absurdity. In the later part of Rasselas, the group visit the pyramids, and here there may have been several background sources for Johnson's account. He certainly knew George Sandys's A Relation of a Journey of 1615, and it is possible that he was also drawing on memories of Richard Pococke's Description of the East of 1743.

These topographical details add an air of reality to the whole. Geoffrey Tillotson believed, however, that the true inspiration for Rasselas was more general: 'There can be little doubt of Johnson's debt to the "Persian Tales" for the subject and outline of"Rasselas"'. (83) Tillotson felt able to make this assertion, although he noted that Johnson scarcely mentions The Persian Tales in his life of Ambrose Philips. Tillotson's argument is largely based on the similarity of plot between the story of Bedreddin in The Persian Tales and Rasselas. Both characters are members of Eastern royalty, born and bred in an Eastern country. They both leave their houses in order to seek for happiness, and this they do firstly in the neighbourhood immediately surrounding their homes, and then in the wider world. Neither character succeeds in finding happiness and both return to the places from which they set out.

Thus, the basic scheme of the two stories is the same. However, there are also many other points of contact, some of which may be coincidental, but many of which must betray some influence of The Persian Tales on Rasselas. Bedreddin and Rasselas both think that there must be someone somewhere in the world who is completely happy, and they try to find him. Both

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(83) Tillotson, Essays..... p. 114

conceal their identities, and travel incognito. They are both accompanied by a wiser man, Atalmulc, surnamed 'Sorrowful Visier' in The Persian Tales, and Imlac in Rasselas, who foresees the failure of the mission. These prophets of doom also have their similarities, apart from their prophetic function. Each tells his own story in an attempt to demonstrate that complete happiness exists for no one, and these stories closely parallel one another. Atalmulc and Imlac were both sons of well-to-do businessmen, and had caused their fathers a great deal of worry on account of their indifference to commercial matters. Atalmulc soon wasted all his inheritance, but, when he was fortunate enough to obtain some money, he embarked on a trading voyage. As a result of this trip, he perceived, and the remark sums up Imlac's experience too, that 'My parents were not so honest as they should be.' (84)

Some of the incidents in the two searches for a happy man are also similar. For example, in The Persian Tales, Atalmulc's search amongst local tradespeople seems to have ended when he finds a happy weaver, whose name is synonymous throughout the city with simple mirth and a free-hearted enjoyment of life. However, it transpires that he too is secretly miserable, and he tells a story about a flying machine which is very similar to one told in Rasselas. (85)

As we have seen with other English works based on oriental material, however, Rasselas is very different from the oriental model. It is based on the tale-within-a-tale device common in

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(84) Philips, Persian Tales. I. p. 297.

(85) Philips, Persian Tales. II. p.14.

conventional oriental tales, and it possesses enough points of comparison with the original for us to be more or less aware of the model. Yet, there are no exciting adventures, beautiful women, nor romances, nor is there the happy conclusion characteristic of most oriental tales.

While these parallels seems to support Tillotson's contention, other critics strongly challenge his belief that the story of Bedreddin was an important source for Rasselas. G.J.Kolb states that:

> fundamental differences between the two leave scant grounds for assuming that the works are of the same kind... either the work shows Johnson to have been an incredibly inept writer of the Arabian Nights type of story or else one must conclude that the tale as .. tale is not the principle which best explains what the book contains. (86)

Mary Lascelles shares Kolb's opinion, arguing that the changes of fortune in the tale of Bedreddin follow 'no other rule than that which the story-teller in the market-place must observe: variety'. (87) She then goes on to consider Johnson's reasons for choosing the eastern tale genre, and notes that it 'gave occasion for idealization in the grand manner', (88) and that the convention:

> was still sufficiently exotic to admit whatever departure from naturalism might best serve its purpose, moral and artistic; it enjoyed a freedom

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(86) G.J.Kolb, 'The Structure of Rasselas', PMLA, LXVI (1951), pp. 715 and 699.

(87) Mary Lascelles, 'Rasselas Reconsidered', Essays and Studies, n.s. IV (1951), p.40.

(88) Ibid, p.42.

> denied to the novel. Its characters could address one another without observing the set forms of civility prescribed by that ceremonious generation...The writer was at liberty to invent a code of manners...the simplicity of access to those whom they would observe: "The laws of eastern hospitality allowed them to enter" - what easier formula could any story-teller desire? (89)

Mary Lascelles also notes the advantages which Johnson derived from the traditionally episodic structure of the eastern tale, enabling him to state his argument through his characters' quest, and through their reactions to people of all kinds in a world whom they, coming from a partly Christian country, meet in a largely Islamic world. They also encounter the Coptic faith, and, in the passage on the pyramids, contemplate the civilisations of the past. The atmosphere of the work, however, remains true to Johnson's own day. Rasselas embodies a typically English eighteenth century view of life and of man's duties, not that of a truly eastern world. There is little of excitement or of the exotic about Rasselas, which is often marked by an ironic and wry humour, typical of Johnson himself. At times it even becomes a commentary on a genre which Johnson is clearly approaching with some caution, The classic story of the abducted girl taken to the harem of the Arab chieftain ends, like so much else in the story, not in the drama one might expect, but in tedium and inactivity. Such twists remind us of the criticism of escapism implicit in the earlier tales discussed above. The final return to Abyssinia seems, in this context, not the depressing defeat which many have supposed, but a statement of balance and of common-sense, of Christian resignation to the facts of the world as it is.

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(89) Mary Lascelles, 'Rasselas Reconsidered', Essays and Studies, n.s.IV (1951), pp.42-3.

Johnson's lack of accuracy in describing some aspects of the world of Rasselas is typical of the writers of his day. Unlike Sir William Jones and William Beckford, he had no special knowledge of the Orient. He, was, however, interested in Persian literature, at least to the extent of hoping for a wider knowledge of it in the west. When his friend, Warren Hastings, was in India, Johnson wrote to him:

> I shall hope, that he who once intended to increase the learning of his country by the introduction of the Persian language, will examine nicely the traditions and histories of the East; that he will survey the wonders of its ancient edifices, and trace the vestiges of its ruined cities, and that, at his return, we shall know the arts and opinions of a race of men from whom very little has been hitherto derived. (90)

We have seen that the appeal of Galland's brilliant translation of The Arabian Nights probably resulted, at least in part, from the fact that a whole series of publications followed in its wake but, nevertheless, an inevitable disjunction appeared between the original tales and the pale and limited imitations. There was a similar gap between the enthusiasm of readers' responses and the moralistic remarks writers felt it incumbent on them to include. This conflict was artistically stifling, and, except for Johnson, no truly great English writer entered the field. Even in Rasselas, the oriental element is deliberately made unimportant in order to stress the universality of the themes, while in The Arabian Nights and The Persian Tales, the stories are largely characterized by the dominance of the plot.

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(90) Boswell, Life of Johnson, IV, p.68.

Our discussion of Sir William Jones and William Beckford in the following chapters will show how changes in English taste in the later eighteenth century are clearly reflected in the orientalism of that period. The study of these later figures shows that the adoption of oriental styles and arts was often associated with the new emphases in taste: the bizarre, the picturesque, the sublime, the wild and morally dubious. Both Jones and Beckford are special and significant figures at certain points in the development of the literary history of the period and in the establishment of general tendencies, and their individual types of orientalism look forward to the English Romantics. On the other hand, it is noticeable that, throughout most of the period considered in this thesis, English writers are able to tame and domesticate the genuinely exotic elements in their sources. One such source was the central example which has been considered in this chapter, The Arabian Nights, a work of popular oriental literature, which unexpectedly became one of the most widely read books of the age.

PERSIAN JONES

Sir William Jones, lawyer, scholar and poet, was the exceptional exponent of orientalism during the later eighteenth century. He was not only a very skilful linguist, but was also blessed with the faculty of rapid and virtually complete recall of all that he read. In his early school days he once wrote out The Tempest from memory. Later he became interested in languages and in Eastern literature, and we know that, while still attending Harrow, he already showed a 'phenomenal gift for languages.' (1)

The first non-European language which Jones acquired was Hebrew, a choice motivated by a strong desire to read the Bible, and especially some of the psalms, in the original form. When he was only 13, he wrote an ode, 'Saul and David', which was copied into her diary, by Mrs. Thrale, who wrote: 'Mr. Seaward has just brought me a very great curiosity a copy of English verses written by Jones the orientalist when he was only 13 years old.' (2) Hebrew was only the beginning, and Jones soon moved on to other Middle Eastern literatures. He mastered numerous languages, and during his brief but productive career translated Greek, Latin, Italian, Persian, Turkish, Arabic, Chinese and Sanskrit poetry

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(1) Franklin Edgerton, "Sir William Jones 1746-1794", Journal of American Oriental Society. (Boston, 1946), LXVI, p. 230.

Garland Canon, Oriental Jones: A Biography of Sir William Jones (1746-1794). (London, 1964), p. 6.

(2) (Mrs.) Hester Lynch Thrale, Thraliana, 1776-1809. ed. K.C. Balderston, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1951), I, p. 237.

into English. He was an example of orientalism in the modern sense of the word: professional study of Eastern languages and civilizations, and, in his own time, he came to be known as 'Persian Jones' and, later, 'Oriental Jones'. His chosen fields of study were in such an undeveloped state that he was able to define these fields as he progressed, creating Semitic studies, comparative linguistics, and also comparative law. His orientalism is distinctive for being both prolific and at the same time, based on accurate knowledge. It is also distinctive, of course, in its reflection of the tastes and trends of Jones's own period, the late eighteenth century.

Jones matriculated at University College, Oxford, in the spring of 1764, when he was eighteen years old, and his extraordinary merit soon drew the attention of his teachers, who exempted him from his classes, since he could progress adequately on his own. He was able to study Arabic manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, and these further stimulated his interest in the languages:

> His partiality for oriental literature now began to display itself in the study of Arabic, to which he was strongly incited by the example and encouragement of a fellow-student of great worth and abilities, who had acquired some knowledge in the celebrated language, and offered him to use of the best books, with which he was provided. (3)

In London, during the vacation, Jones made the acquaintance of an Arab from Aleppo, named Mirza, and he immediately seized the opportunity of learning Arabic from a native speaker. He therefore, 'for a time maintained

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(3) Baron Teignmouth, Memoirs of the Life, Writings and Correspondence of Sir William Jones. (London, 1806), p. 32.

at his own expense an Arab from Aleppo whom he brought up to Oxford from London to assist him in his new linguistic adventure.' (4) Jones began his lessons with Mirza by orally translating into Arabic one section of Galland's translation of the Thousand and One Nights each morning. This was not entirely satisfactory, since Jones was particularly interested in classical Arabic, and wished to explore its literature in some depth, but, apart from Mirza, who was not a scholar, he could find no one suitably qualified to offer him the kind of assistance he needed. Finally, financial difficulties compelled him to disperse with this solitary helper, who now left for London, but he had by this time acquired sufficient basic knowledge to continue his studies independently.

During his study of Arabic, Jones found out 'What he never before suspected, a near connection between the modern Persic and Arabic' (5). This discovery of similarities between the two systems of writing motivated him to learn Persian as well, so that he might make its treasures widely available to a previously uninitiated Europe. In this endeavour he had no help from a native speaker, and was largely dependent on the Thesaurus Linguarum Orientalium Turcicae Arabicae Persicae of Fransiscus Meninski, the only Persian grammar available at that time. In addition he read Sadi's Gulistan, and made occasional use of the translation by Georgius Genitus. His progress was sufficiently good to enable him to compile an elementary Persian Grammar of his own, prepared for a friend

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(4) A.J. Arberry, "The Founder: William Jones", Oriental Essays. (London, 1960), p. 49.

(5) Teignmouth, Memoirs ..... p. 33.

about to visit India on official business. By the time he took his B.A. degree, his reputation as an oriental scholar was advancing, and his knowledge of Hebrew, Persian, Arabic and Turkish was already becoming known. However, he was still facing financial difficulties, until, in the summer of 1725, he was relieved to some extent by Mr. Arden, brother-in-law of Dr. Sumner, and Jonathan Shipley, the Dean of Winchester. Through their joint recommendation, he was appointed private tutor to George John, Viscount Althrop, the seven-year-old son of the first Earl Spencer. This position enabled him to continue his studies at leisure, encouraged by the Spencers, who gave him the opportunity to use their well endowed library, one of the finest in Europe, where he could study the Old Testament in its original form.

In mid 1766 Jones was awarded a Bennet fellowship at Oxford, which carried with it the privilege of being allowed to consult rare Persian and Arabic manuscripts in the Bodleian. During the course of his studies he came across De Sacra Poesi Hebraeorum, a fine treatise on Hebrew poetry by Bishop Robert Lowth. This work stimulated him to think in terms of writing a similar treatise on other Middle Eastern poetry, which finally appeared as his Commentaries.

At Althrop, Jones began a friendship, which was to become intimate and to be long-lasting, with Count Charles Reviczki, a Polish diplomat who shared Jones's love for oriental, and particularly Persian literature. The friendship proved advantageous to both men. At the time, Count Reviczki was involved in translating the Odes of Hafiz, and Jones found in him the first person with whom he could carry on a scholarly and

critical discussion of Persian poetry. For his part, Reviczki 'was pleased to be able to consult the advice of his erudite young colleague' (6), and, by the warmth of his friendship, he made a deep and lasting impression on Jones's mind. Within a year of their meeting; Reviczki left England, but we are told that he and Jones 'carried on between them a long and learned correspondence relating chiefly to Persian and Arabic poetry.' (7) In their letters the two enthusiasts wrote of the general neglect of oriental literature in Europe, and discussed its beauties and the ways in which Europe might benefit from its study.

It was through his acquaintance with Reviczki that Jones grew to know and love Hafiz's poetry. He wrote to Reviczki in April 1768: 'Our Hafiz is most assuredly a poet worthy to sup with gods; every day I take pleasure in his work, which daily gives me more delight by its charm and attractive style.' (8) It was the rich sensuousness of Hafiz's imagery which made most impression on Jones. He believed that new life and spirit could be infused into English poetry if sensuousness of this kind could be introduced.

Despite the fact that Jones had so far published nothing related to oriental studies, his reputation as a scholar of Eastern literature and language had spread as far as the Continent. In 1768, King Christian

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(6) Arberry, "The Founder", p. 50.

(7) Durgaprasanna Raychaudhury, Sir William Jones and His Translation of Kalidasa's Sakuntala. (Calcutta, 1928), p. 15.

(8) (Sir) William Jones, The Letters of Sir William Jones. ed. Cannon Garland, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1970), I, p. 5.

VII of Denmark asked him to translate into French, the Tarikh-i-Nadiri, a manuscript copy of the official history of Nadir Shah which had been written by Mirza Mehdi. It was a lengthy and laborious task, as the Persian of the manuscript was quite different from that which he had learned, and Jones was reluctant to spend his time on it. His first response was to return the work to the Danish King's Secretary of State with his reasons for not wishing to make the translation. However, when Christian hinted that he might otherwise have to take the manuscript to France for translation, Jones was persuaded to undertake it. It took him a year to complete the French version, and this meant that his work on Commentaries received no attention during this period, Despite his initial reluctance to work on this history, however, the task of translation was accomplished faithfully and even brilliantly. (9) Because Christian praised it highly and unreservedly, making Jones a member of the Royal Society of Copenhagen, this translation heightened Jones's reputation as an oriental scholar. The reception given to this French version also led to a growing demand for an English rendering, and Jones published one in an abridged form in 1773. To The History of Nadir Shah, Jones added an original piece, in French, entitled 'Traité sur la Poésie Orientale', in which he attempted to elaborate and set out the particular attributes of oriental poetry. He described it as being fertile in powerful expressions, daring metaphors, fiery sentiments, and animated descriptions.

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(9) Arberry, "The Founder", p. 50.

Viscount Althrop enrolled at Harrow in 1768, and Jones accompanied him there. He was able to progress with his studies, and rapidly completed the initial draft of his Persian Grammar. In 1769 he joined the Spencer family on a European tour, and, during this period, in addition to continuing his scholarly work, he composed a tragic drama on a traditional Turkish theme, the murder of the Ottoman Mustafa by his father, Suleiman I. This play was never published or performed, and it is now, unfortunately, lost. If located, it would furnish a useful example of yet another of Jones's manifold talents.

The Spencers spent seven months at Nice, before returning to Paris. Jones was afforded the opportunity of studying rare oriental manuscripts in Paris. He had added Chinese to his repertoire of languages and began to read Confucius in earnest. He translated one of the Shing Ching (Classic of Odes), believed to have been the work of Confucius. Later, when he published the Second Classical Book of the Chinese, he included these translations with it.

Around this time, Jones had to make a decision which caused him great anxiety. After much deliberation, and with great regret, he decided to leave the Spencers and to study law. He did so primarily for financial reasons. (10) After resigning from his tutorship, he joined the Middle Temple on 19th.September 1770; his correspondence of this period demonstrates that his interest in oriental literature remained undiminished.

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(10) Edgerton, S.W. Jones ..... , p. 230.

He wrote to Reviczki in 1771:

> As soon as I arrived back in England, I was caught in a web, consisting of a huge variety of worries. I was surrounded by friends, acquaintances, and relatives, who encouraged me to expel from my way of life, for a short time, poetry and Asian literature. They said I should devote my attention to public speaking and legal studies, that I should frequent the law-courts and in a word, become a barrister and be devoted to ambition. As it happens, I followed their advice without much regret, since a legal career is the only way open for those who seek my country's highest honours. I am amazingly fond of both fame and hard work; so here I am, a barrister. From now on my letters will have a more political flavour; and if at some time I am fortunate enough to approach a position of political importance, you will be an Atticus to my Cicero, sharing in all my plans and secrets.
>
> But please do not think that I am completely neglecting more cultured literature; I have decided to publish some poems in English immediately, and I shall have my tradegy 'Suleiman' produced when I can find actors adequate for the task. In addition, I have started to sketch out a verse epic of tremendous scope, called the Britanneis, though I shall have to postpone that task until I am somehow granted some spare time in reasonsble circumstances. In the meantime I am reading those marvellous Persian poets. I have a splendid supply of manuscript books, some purchased by me and some provided by others. The collection includes a number of historians, philosophers, and poets of great reputation among the Persians. One I like especially is Jami's poem called Yūsef va Zulaikha. Each couplet of the poem which has about 4,070 of them, has the pure brilliance of a little star. (11)

His legal studies, taken up to ensure a secure future, failed to interest him to the same extent as his orientalism. Following his real interests, he still continued with his studies and, during the next few years, published the following five works:

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(11) S.W. Jones, The Letters .... . I, p. 85.

A Grammar of Persian Language (1771)

Lettre à Mosieur A*** du P*** (1771)

Dissertation sur la Littérature Orientale (1771)

Poems, Consisting Chiefly of Translations from Asiatick Languages (1772)

Poeseos Asiaticae Commentariorum (1774)

A Grammar of Persian Language was, as I have mentioned, drawn up for the benefit of a friend who was to visit India, where the official language at the court of the kings and princes was still Persian. Jones envisaged the book as being, not only a grammar, for which he hoped to find a market amongst officials of the East India Company, but also an introduction to Persian literature, which might encourage students to read into the subject more deeply. To explain the principal rules of the language he selected illustrative examples from Hafiz, as well as from other poets. 'Such quotations' he remarked 'will give some variety to a subject naturally barren and unpleasant; will serve as a specimen of oriental style; and will be more easily retained in the memory than the rules delivered in mere prose.' (12) It was through translating Hafiz's famous 'Persian Song' in his Grammar that Jones made one of his most important contributions to English poetry. He hoped to attract Europeans to the idea that Persian literature might help them to enrich their own, declaring in his preface:

> The Persian language is rich, melodious, and elegant; it has been spoken many ages by the greatest Princes in the politest courts of Asia and a number of admirable works have been written in it by historians, philosophers, and poets, who found it capable of expressing with equal advantage the most beautiful and the most elevated sentiments. (13)

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(12) Jones, Works. V, p. 205.

(13) (Sir) William Jones, A Grammar of The Persian Language. (london, 1771), p. 1.

Jones also hoped that other European scholars, prompted by his introductory work, might embark upon the translation of the old Persian manuscripts which were deposited in various libraries. He believed that this would assist the intellectual and cultural regeneration of Europe. That Jones himself did bring about a certain regeneration of English literature was acknowledged by his contemporary, Doctor Johnson. Presenting a copy of the Grammar to William Hastings, Johnson wrote: 'That Literature is not forsaking us, and that your favourite language is not neglected, will appear from the book.' (14)

The critical reception which the Grammar received was on the whole very favourable. The Monthly Review, for example, stated: 'Having thus given a general review of this Persian Grammar, we heartily recommend it as the most useful work that hitherto appeared on the subject.' (15) When Jones was admitted to Johnson's Club, it was as 'the elegant author of the Persian Grammar, 'clearly implying that this achievement was felt to be the most important one in his career up to that date.

The Grammar became very popular; so popular that by 1828 it had gone through nine London editions. For many years it was a standard work, teaching Persian to numerous future orientalists. It was this book which, rightly years later, awakened Edward Fitzgerald's interest in the poetry of Hafiz and Sadi. Fitzgerald wrote to Edward Byles Cowell: 'As to Jones's Grammar, I have a sort of love for it; instead of such dry as dust scholars

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(14) Boswell, Life .... . IV, p. 69

(15) Monthly Review. (London, 1772), XLVI, p.

as usually make Grammar, how much more than ever necessary it is to have men of Poetic Taste to do it, to make the thing as delightful as possible to learners.' (16) It would certainly have given Jones a great deal of satisfaction if he had known that his encouragement of Persian studies would, years later, bear fruit in the translation of the Rubaiyat.

The Grammar is a serious introduction to Persian poetry as well as a grammar; indeed it could be argued that one of the chief purposes of the work was to make Hafiz directly accessible to English speaking readers. The poem 'A Persian Song of Hafiz' occurs first in the context of a short section of instruction on Persian poetry, and one can move from the poem in Persian to an interlinear translation of the Persian script, and then to an analysis of the relationship between the spelling and the pronunciation. Next comes a literal translation of the poem, then Jones's versified rendering, which clarifies some local difficulties in the literal version. Finally, one can return with renewed interest to the Persian original. Jones's versified rendering of the 'Song of Hafiz' can be read simply as a translation, complete in itself. However, what Jones intended was that all the manifestations of the poem, listed above, should be used as clues to how the original should be read.

To the versified 'Song of Hafiz', Jones adds an appreciation, which is also a somewhat critical evaluation of the Persian poet's art: 'This is the sort of charming, rather superficial little poem Hafiz has written.' (17)

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(16) Arberry, The Romance of The Rubaiyat. (London, 1959), p. 14.

Alfred Terhune, The Life of Edward Fitzgerald. (New Haven, 1947) p. 172.

(17) (Sir) William Jones, A Grammar of Persian Language. (London, 1828), p. 230.

This is, in fact, quite an accurate assessment, for, although the original might be included in a collection of Hafiz's twenty or thirty best poems, it is perhaps less serious and less complex than some of his more notable productions. Yet, it is marked by compactness and minute precision in the choice of words, and these words have many layers of potential meaning which are lost in Jones's translation. For example, Jones gives a literal rendering of part of the fourth verse: 'Of our imperfect love, the beauty of the beloved has no necessity.' However, in the original, this also has the implication that God is immanent and has no real need of our love; as well as the second implication that love is the purpose of the creation, and beauty evidence of that divine presence which permeates the whole of life.

Throughout the poem, it is clear that Jones could not produce either the form of the original (the translation contains six lines for every two in the Persian) or its richness of meaning. The interplay of sound, the persistent mono-rhyme, the allusive phrasing, the elegant variations on particular themes; all these elements, so delightful to one truly familiar with the fertile native tradition, are lost. Jones himself admired Persian poetry, but he had only a limited familiarity with it and he could not help judging the poem by the robust standards of English poetry. Thus, he rendered the poetry as he heard it, expressing enjoyment, but not trying to inject a subtlety of meaning or vigour of feeling that, as far as he was concerned, it lacked. He conveyed what the original seemed to him to convey: an easy melody. R.M. Hewitt draws attention to the point that one line from the Song: 'A youth so lovely and so coy!' is

pure Edmund Waller:

> Like Phoebus sang the no less amorous boy,
> Like Daphne she, as lonely and as coy. (18)

This is consistent with Jones's interpretation of the poem as being allusive and polished, and it is appropriate that his version should come within the tradition typically represented by Waller. Jones appears to have presented the poem as he experienced it, and the result is a charming set of verses. It may be that he considered the ideas of the Song, rather than its form, to be the aspect most likely to initiate innovation in English poetry. He was apologetic with regard to the rhyme-scheme he had adopted, though it was later borrowed by no less eminent a figure than Byron, who parodied the song in 'The Bamboula', and imitated the rhyme-scheme in 'Remind me not, remind me not', a early lyric. (19). Jones, however, does not attempt to imitate the original metre.

The final stanza of Jones's versified rendering has been the subject of particular criticism, including that of A.J. Arberry. In the literal translation this stanza reads:

> Thou hast pronounced a ghazel and has pierced a pearl,
> Come and sweetly sing (it), O Hafiz!
> For upon thy string (of pearls) do the heavens diffuse
> the knot of the pleiades.

This is Jones's literal translation, accurate in accordance with the remainder of the poem, but it is far removed from the version of the same lines given later in versified form as:

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(18) R.M. Hewitt, "Harmonious Jones", Essays and Studies by Members of The English Association. (Oxford, 1942), XXVIII, p. 51.

(19) Garland Cannon, Sir William Jones, Orientalist: An Annotated Bibliography of His Works. (Honolulu, 1952), pp. 21-22.

Go boldly forth, my simple lay,
Whose accents flow with artless ease,
Like orient pearls at random strung:
Thy notes are sweet, the damsels say;
But O! far sweeter, if they please
The nymph for whom these notes are sung. (20)

Arberry, on the whole, approves of Jones's Song and defends it from criticism. However, he is highly critical of this stanza where he says that Jones has not merely weakened but actually reversed the implications of the original: the stringing of pearls is meant by Hafiz to suggest the precision and delicacy of Persian poetry, its manner hardly describable as 'artless ease', its production like 'oriental pearls at random strung', but rather like pearls chosen and matched with extreme care. Jones has chosen to alter the original to make it square with his own idea of the nature of Persian poetry, a conception which he set out in the second Essay and in the Essay on the Poetry of the Eastern Nations.

One of Jones's three publications of 1771 was a letter attacking the work, Zend-Avesta, Containing the Sayings of Zoroaster, by the French scholar, Anquetil Duperron. In 1754, Duperron had chanced upon four facsimile pages of the Vendidad Sadi, which had been brought to England from Surat, and which were now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. His inspection of the then unknown language in which this Parsi book was written was a revelatory experience for the young Frenchman, and he determined to become the first European to decipher it. Duperron was

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(20) A.J. Arberry, "Oriental Pearls at Random Strung", Bulletin of the School of Oriental And African Studies, University of London. (London, 1946), XI, p. 703.

a resourceful adventurer and traveller who had been labelled the Marco Polo of the eighteenth century. In order to obtain a passage to India, he joined the French army, and, for almost a decade, while France fought with Britain over the Indian question, he suffered many adversities with remarkable resilience. Eventually, he successfully overcame the distrust of the Parsi priests, and was enabled to learn their sacred language as well as to obtain the manuscript of Zend-Avesta.

On his return home, Duperron compared his manuscript with the papers in the Bodleian, and subsequently wrote Zend-Avesta Containing the Saying of Zoroaster. However, since he had been badly received in Oxford, he ridiculed certain scholars of the University in the preface to his book, especially one, Dr. Hunt. Jones, at that time engaged in his legal studies, was the only person with sufficient knowledge of eastern languages to restore his country's damaged prestige by a satirical attack on Duperron's work. This attack appeared in 1771, only a few months after the appearance of the book with which it was concerned, and took the form of a fifty page Letter. Written in a witty, elegant manner which persuaded some learned Frenchmen to think its author a Parisian ~~bel esprit~~ dandy, it abused Duperron's work, skilfully deriding those aspects of his writing which appeared pedantic and conceited, and upholding the honour of English scholarship.

Jones was motivated by chauvinism; he deplored the passing across the Channel of Britain's eminence in Persian studies, and he believed that he had exposed Anquetil's follies, detected his imposture, and repaid his invectives. At the same time Jones had been genuinely

disappointed with the contents of Zend-Avesta. It was the work of the brilliant philosopher Zoroaster and should, he thought, have been characterized by a high level of literary attainment. Instead, he found dull ideas, absurd tales, meaningless legislation and ridiculous demons and gods. Jones had been attempting to persuade his European readers of the wonders to be found in oriental literature, and now Duperron seemed to be portraying the whole Zoroastrian code as shallow and worthless. Jones therefore criticized both the content and the style of the work. He called the antiquity of the manuscript on which it was based into question, arguing that this manuscript was a modern forgery on which Duperron had wasted eighteen years. Turning his attention to the style, Jones labelled it elegant and bombastic. The following passage is a good example of the vigour of Jones's attack:

> Your translation, Sir, confirms us in our judgement that however much the whole convocation of the Magis would to assure us of the contrary, we will never believe that the least capable charlatan would even be able to write the absurdities with which your last two volumes are filled. (21)

Jones's judgements were widely applauded, and the Letter undoubtedly helped to advance his fame as a literary figure and orientalist, perhaps strengthening his resolve not to abandon oriental studies after all. Hunt, the insulted Oxford don, publicly thanked Jones on behalf of Oxford and of England as a whole. The Monthly Review, was also generous in its

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(21) (Sir) William Jones, The Works of Sir William Jones, with the Life of the Author. by Lord Teignmouth, 13 vols. (London, 1867), X, pp. 408-409.

estimate of the Letter, coming out wholeheartedly in favour of the English author:

> Wit, ridicule, and reasoning are here employed against Monsieur (Anquétil Duperron). His absurd pretensions to eastern literature are treated with utmost pleasantary: and we have a full exposition of total significance of those writings which he has impudently ascribed to Zoroaster. (22)

However, this estimate is over generous, since Jones's polemic was not authentic scholarly criticism, but relied for its impact upon its satirical vein. Although Anquetil's translation is not free from errors, it does not deserve such harsh condemnation. Indeed, many of the mistakes arose from the unreliability of the Parsi priests, whom Anquetil considered trustworthy. At that time, the greatness of his discovery was not given the wide recognition it deserved, but Jones's Letter merely served to delay the praise which was the Frenchman's due. His was a vital pioneering study which provided a basis for later scholars to develop. In later years, when the old and blind Duperron had ceased to care about Jones's remarks, the latter moderated his views and, in 1789, even went so far as to acknowledge Duperron's contribution, though with reservations, in 'A Discourse to the Persians, presented to the Asiatic Society of Bengal':

> M. Anquetil, who had the merit of undertaking a voyage to India, in his earliest youth, with no other view than to recover the writings of Zerathust, and who would have acquired a brilliant reputation in France, if he had not sullied ~~acquired~~ it by his immoderate vanity and ~~violence~~ virulence of temper ... has exhibited in his work, entitled Zend-Avesta, two vocabularies in Zend and Pahlavi, which he had found in an approved collection of Rewayat, or Traditional Pieces in modern Persian. (23)

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(22) Monthly Review. 1771, XLV, p. 498

(23) (Sir) William Jones, The Works of Sir William Jones. 6 vols. (London, 1799), I, pp. 82-83.

Like the Letter, Jones's Dissertation Sur la Littérature Orientale was a fifty-page pamphlet published in London in 1771. A kind of companion piece to his 'Traité', it grew out of the materials which he had been collecting in commonplace books for years, but which he had not used in the Grammar and was not intending to use in his Commentariorum. In the Dissertation, he makes an impassioned plea for the study of oriental literature. Lamenting that Asian manuscripts are shut up in the royal and university libraries of Europe, he writes:

> Let the monarchs, the republics, the universities, the great men who have taste or claim to have it, strive to establish in their principal cities printing presses for the oriental languages ... Princes of Europe ... listen to the advice of a free man who cares about your honour but does not want your protection. Encourage the study of Asian languages ... Erect colleges, printing houses ... re-create the great days of the Medicis in our century. (24)

In the Dissertation he was more systematic than he had yet been in his discussion of oriental writing. This time he urged Europeans to forget their prejudices and take advantage of any Eastern poetical irregularities by correcting their own. He had particular praise for the love poetry of Imru-al-Kais, Nizami, and Hafiz; the virtuous poetry of Sadi and Attar; and for the heroic poetry of Antara, Firdawsi and Abul Ala.

In January 1772, Jones published a small collection of poems, Poems, Consisting Chiefly of Translations from the Asiatic Languages, most of which he had written before he began his legal studies in 1770.

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(24) Jones, Works, 1799, V, pp. 527-530.

Also included in the volume were two essays. It was this book which established Jones's reputation as a poet, and a second edition was published in 1777. Despite the title of the collection, most of the poems included were not really translations. The only direct translation was from a version of an Ode by Messihi, the Turkish poet. The others were adaptations, claiming to present the public with 'the genuine compositions of Arabia in an English dress.' (25)

One of the essays included in this volume was 'An Essay on the Poetry of Eastern Nations', and the main purpose of the essay was to draw the attention of lovers of literature to the almost unknown literary treasures that existed in oriental languages. In the preface to the Poems, he made several direct comparisons between Middle-Eastern literature and the classics of Greece and Rome. However, the purpose in doing this was not to place Asian literature in competition with the works that Europe has traditionally regarded as being classics. Rather, he used the comparisons to make another plea for more translations of oriental literature:

> The heroic poem of Ferdusi might be versified as easily as Iliad, and I see no reason why The Delivery of Persia by Cyrus should not be a subejct as interesting to us, as the anger of Achilles, or the wandering of Ulysses. The Odes of Hafez, and of Mesihi, would suit our lyric measures as well as those ascribed to Anacreon; and the seven Arabic elegies, that were hung up in the temple of Mecca, and of which there are several fine copies at Oxford, would, no doubt, be highly acceptable to the lovers of antiquity, and the admirers of native genius. But when I propose a translation

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(25) Jones, Works, 1807, X, p. 204.

of these Oriental pieces, as a work likely to meet with success, I only mean to invite my readers, who have leisure and industry, to the study of the languages in which they are written; and am very far insinuating that I have the remotest design of performing any part of the task myself. For, to say the truth, I should not have suffered even the following trifles to see the light, if I were not very desirous of recommending to the learned world a species of literature, which abounds with so many new expressions, new images, and new inventions. (26)

'Solima, an Arabic Eclogue' provides a good example of how Jones adapted his original material, and gave the poems an unmistakably English quality. Most of the figures, sentiments and descriptions are drawn from Arabic verses about benevolence and hospitality, but Jones has arranged and connected them in order to form a unified poem. What is more, Jones nowhere mentions the names of the poets from whom he has borrowed his materials. The opening of the poem immediately recalls William Collins's Persian Eclogues (1742):

Collins: Ye Persian maids, attend your Poets lays,
And hear how sheperds pass their golden days. (27)

Jones: Ye maids of Aḍen! hear a loftier tale
Than e'er was sung in meadow, bower or dale. (28)

The poem celebrates an Arabian princess, who has built a caravanserai with pleasant gardens for the refreshment of travellers and pilgrims, and a number of couplets achieve an oriental richness of colouring:

See yon fair groves that o'er Amana rise,
And with their spicy breath embalm the skies;
Where every breeze sheds incense o'er the vales,
And every shrub the scent of musk exhales! (29)

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(26) Cannon, Oriental Jones. pp. 29-30. See also: Jones, Works. X, pp. 354-355.

(27) The Poems of Thomas Gray, William Collins, Oliver Goldsmith. ed. R. Lonsdale, (London,1969), p. 372, Line: 1.

(28) Jones, 'Solima', Works, 1807, p. 206, Lines: 1-2.

(29) Ibid. Lines: 15-18.

However, despite this attempt at oriental richness, the overall effect is that of a typical eighteenth century pastoral poem with a slightly different setting. Indeed, Jones's descriptions of nature resemble quite closely those in Pope's Pastorals, and it is very possible that Jones had the Pastorals in mind when rendering his Arabian original into English:

Pope: Eternal Beauties grace the shining scene,
Fields ever fresh, and groves for ever green! (30)

Jones: See through yon opening glade a glittering scene,
Lawns ever gay, and meadows ever green! (31)

The moral of the poem recalls the Man of Ross, whose benevolence Pope exalts in one of his Moral Essays. Pope sought to set up the Man of Ross as 'an example to greater and wealthier men how they ought to use their Fortunes.' (32) Jones duly acknowledged his debt to Pope in a note to this poem: 'It was not easy in this part of the translation to avoid a turn similar to that of Pope in the known description of Man of Ross.' (33)

Like 'Solima', 'The Palace of Fortune, An Indian Tale' is not a translation as such. Jones based the poem on a story in Alexander Dow's Tales Translated from the Persian of Inatulla, but added descriptions and episodes from other eastern writers whom he does not name. The moral, as in 'Solima', was Jones's own. The story is that one day Young Maia

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(30) Alexander Pope, Pastoral Poetry and an Essay on Criticism. ed. A. Audra & Aubrey Williams, (London, 1961), 'Winter', p. 94, Lines: 70-71.

(31) Jones, Works, 1807, X, p. 207, Lines: 19-20.

(32) Pope, Works. 10 vols. ed. W. Elwin & W.J. Courthope, (London, 1871-1889), III. p. 529.

(33) Jones, Works, 1807, X, p. 207.

suddenly became conscious of her beauty, and lamented that it should be wasted in solitude. She was then carried to the Palace of Fortune by the goddess of that name, who is the source of earthly blessings. There, the goddess taught her to 'scorn folly of each human prayer', to see that those who beg for Pleasure, Glory, Riches and Knowledge are often disappointed and even destroyed by what they think most desirable. The goddess tells Maia:

> Take sage example from this moral scene;
> See how vain pleasures sting the lips they kiss,
> How asps are hid beneath the bow'rs of bliss!
> Whilst ever fair the flow'r of temp'rance blows,
> Unchang'd her leaf and without thorn her rose.

The poem presents an eighteenth century moral tale in heroic couplets, and Jones, like Johnson, lets:

> Observation with extensive view,
> Survey mankind, from China to Peru. (34)

The final lines of 'The Palace of Fortune' might easily be taken for Johnson's:

> Erelong the damsel reach'd her native vale,
> And told with joyful heart her moral tale;
> Resign'd to heav'n, and lost to all beside,
> She liv'd contented, and contented died.

The story of Maia's journey and of her ultimate return recalls Johnson's Rasselas, and it is possible that this influence reflects an actual meeting between Johnson and Jones. Jones may have been introduced to Dr. Johnson by his friend, Robert Chambers, at Oxford in 1766, and, if this meeting did take place, the young oriental scholar may well have taken the opportunity to discuss the recently published Rasselas with Johnson.

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(34) Samuel Johnson, "The Vanity of Human Wishes', The Poems. ed. D.N.Smith & E.L.McAdam, (Oxford, 1951), p.30, Lines:1-2.

Marie E. De Meester has pointed to similarities in expression and thought between 'The Palace of Fortune' and 'Queen Mab' (~~38~~ 35) It seems likely that Shelley found Jones's allegories more sympathetic and comprehensible than most of Jones's own generation. Another link between Jones and the poetry of the Romantic period may be found in his description of the fantastic bejewelled landscape in 'The Palace of Fortune', which foreshadows the spectacular scenery of Coleridge's 'Kubla Khan':

> In mazy curls the flowing jasper wav'd
> O'er its smooth bed with polish'd agate pav'd;
> And on a rock of ice, by magick rais'd,
> High in the midst a gorgeous palace blaz'd ... (~~39~~ 36)

Despite conventional poetic diction and vague or weak atmosphere, 'The Palace of Fortune' contains some interesting and partly experimental elements, and shows wide-ranging literary tastes in the description of the sumptuous palace-hall. For example, there are overtones of Spenser and of Keats, as well as oriental imagery taken from specific Persian, Arabic, or Turkish poems, but describing lush, artificial, and magical settings like those in The Arabian Nights.

'The Seven Fountains, an Eastern Allegory,' written in 1767, is as Jones says, an imitation of Nizami's Haft Paikar, or the Seven Images. It is based on a tale from Ibn Arabshah's Fakihatul Kholafa and Jones grafted on to this 'the Prince Agib' episode from The Arabian Nights.

(~~38~~ 35) Marie E. De Meester, Oriental Influences in English Literature of the Early Nineteenth Century. (Heidelberg, 1915), p. 38.

(~~39~~ 36) Jones, Works. 1807, X, p. 214, Lines: 97-100.

A long haired prince, with ten young men in attendance, is floating on a barge. The barge approaches an island, the prince disembarks, and is enticed into a life of sensuality and beauty. He enters a sumptuous pleasure dome:

> At last they reach'd the bosom of a wood,
> Where on a hill a radiant palace stood;
> A sumptuous dome, by hands immortal made,
> Which on its walls and on its gates display'd
> The gems that in the rocks of Tibet glow,
> The pearls that in the shells of Ormus grow.
> And now a numerous train advanc to meet
> The youth, descending from his regal seat;
> Whom to a rich and spacious hall they led, [37]
> With silken carpets delicately spread ... (~~40~~)

Here he is enthroned by maidens who represent the delights of the senses.

After seeing wonderful pageants, he enjoys sex with all the maidens.

Everything goes well until one day, left alone, he starts exploring a mysterious door which he has never opened before. Here he encounters a 'sullen gloom, thick, hideous, wild; a cavern, or a tomb;' [38] (~~41~~), he is then addressed by an aged man (Religion) who explains that the prince's reign will soon end in death, but agrees to help him escape. The whole poem is characterized by lush, sensuous descriptions and imagery showing the influence of Persian or Arabic poetry:

> The wondering youth beheld an opeing glade,
> Where in the midst a crystal fountain play'd;
> The silver sands, that on its bottom grew,
> Were strown with pearls and gems of varied hue;
> The diamond sparkled like the star of day,
> And the soft topaz shed a golden ray;

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[37] (~~40~~) Jones, Works, 1807, X, p. 233, Lines: 87-96.

[38] (~~41~~) Ibid. p. 245, Lines: 404-405.

Clear amethysts combin'd their purple gleam
With the mild emerald's sigh-refreshing beam;
The sapphire smil'd like yon blue plain above,39
And rubies spread the blushing tint of love. (42)

The only actual translation in Jones's 1772 Collection of Poems is 'A Turkish Ode of Mesihi'. The original is Mesihi's Qasida, and its subject is the return of spring. Mesihi's poem is made up of stanzas each ending with a reiterated refrain. In his literal translation Jones renders this refrain as 'Be cheerful; be full of mirth; for the Spring passes soon away: it will not last,' and, in verse, he gives it as 'Be gay: too soon the flowers of the Spring will fade.' The argument of Mesihi's poem is vague, and it is not completely clear to whom it is being addressed or what action is being called for; the main emphasis is on the description of trees, flowers, sunbeams and dew. Mesihi himself boasted of the novelty of his imagery: 'I do not put pre-chewed ideas in my mouth; and I am not a baby fed on mush.' (40) This novelty was obviously attractive to Jones, in view of his interest in renewing the images of English pastoral poetry. The images of the poem may be summarized as follows:

* The nightingale announces the coming of spring, which animates every garden, and silver blooms appear on the almond trees.
* Flowers decorate the gardens, and a rose pavilion rises.
* Its edge is lit by Ahmad's light, whose companion the tulips resemble.
* Dew shines on the lilies like water on a scimitar and falls on the rose garden.

(~~42~~ 39) Jones, Works. 1807, X, P. 237, Lines: 185-194.

(~~43~~ 40) E.J. Gibb, A History of Ottoman Poetry. 6 vols. ed. E.G. Browne, (London, 1909), VI, p. 90.

* The roses and tulips resemble the cheeks of lovely maidens with pearls hanging in their ears like drops of dew.

* Tulips, roses, and anemones, appear in the gardens: the showers and sunbeams, like sharp lancets, tinge the banks with the colour of blood.

* The time is past when plants were sick and rosebuds hung a thoughtful head on this breast. Now it is the season when tulips colour mountains and rocks.

* By morning clouds shed gems on the rose garden. The breath of the wind is full of musk.

* The air in the garden is so fragrant, the dew is changed to rose water before it falls. The sky spreads a pavilion of bright clouds over the garden.

* The black winds once filled the garden. Now the king of the world restores justice. In his reign the happy cupbearer has received the wine he wished for.

* By these strains I hoped to celebrate this delightful valley ... Thou art a nightingale with a sweet voice, O Mesihi, when thou talkst with damsels, whose cheeks are like roses. (41)

The whole poem is framed by the image of the messenger nightingale, and this nightingale image is linked with the almond tree, stanza 1 and with the poet himself, stanza 11. There are also references to flowers, a garden, light, dew and maidens, which form a continually varying pattern of imagery.

Jones's prose translation of the 'Turkish Ode' shows that he had fully understood the original. However, when he wrote his verse translation, he considerably expanded it. His 66 line poem is 22 lines longer than Mesihi's, and some of the additions are not merely explanatory

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(41) Jones, Works, 1807, X, pp. 271-276.

paraphrase but new matter. Jones's poem is an attempt to capture the spirit of the original rather than an exact rendering, and he succeeds in giving his version unity and a smooth flowing texture, so that the poem can be experienced as a whole rather than as a patchwork of clearly discernible parts. It seems that in such a work balance is needed. To succeed, a poetic translation needs to be in good contemporary English poetry, but it must also be different from other good contemporary poetry. It is naturally easier to stay closer to the wording of the original in a prose version, but such a version is in fact further from the essential nature of the original, since that is in poetry, not prose. There is no doubt that in Jones's 'Turkish Ode' a good deal is lost, but also, for Jones and his readers, much is gained.

Jones was not content merely to write poetry, however; he also wanted to introduce his European readers to his views regarding Middle Eastern literature. These views are repeated very clearly in essays he wrote between 1770 and 1774:

Traité sur la Pŏesie Orientale (1770)
Dissertation sur la Littérature Orientale (1771)
An Essay on the Poetry of the Eastern Nations (1772)
Poeseos Asiaticae Commentariorum (1774)

These four essays deal with the same subject in different ways, each making the point that oriental literature is rich in imagery and ideas. Jones's preoccupation here was purely literary, dealing with attitudes towards poetry and imagination, and as Rowse writes, Jones 'with his enthusiasm and imagination, his linguistic genius, opened up a

new world to the mind and literature of Europe. (45)

It seemed to Jones that oriental literature could be profitably exploited in order to enrich European literature. When he read Arabic and Persian writings, the strange world he found displayed there made a lasting impression on his mind. He seems to have been stimulated by descriptions of the apparently limitless hot deserts of Arabia, the cool oases, and the nomadic life of the Bedouins, and he considered that the qualities of imagination which distinguished these literatures were completely different from anything in contemporary European literature. Everything was new and enchanting, and he believed that, given the will, the poets of the West could experience these qualities of imagination and use them to recreate European poetry. He therefore passionately urged them to study the literature of the East.

This appeal to English and other European poets to turn their attention to the East can be understood only in the context of precept and practice in the poetic world of Jones's time. The voice of reason and common sense was not the only one making itself heard, but it was predominant, as is exemplified in the works of Pope and Johnson, poets who were preoccupied with the aim of improving manners and morals. Pope declared: 'No writing is good that does not tend to better mankind some way or other.' (46) Dr. Johnson similarly proclaimed: 'It is

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(45) A.L. Rowse, "Welsh Orientalist: Sir William Jones", History Today. (London, 1971), XXI, p. 61.

(46) Joseph Spence, Observations, Anecdotes and Characters of Books and Men. ed. J.M. Osborn, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1966), I, p. 196.

always a writer's duty to make the world better.' (44) This was to be effected in poetry by instructing through pleasing: 'The end of writing is to instruct; the end of poetry is to instruct by pleasing.' (45)

It was into a literary atmosphere where these views represented orthodoxy that Jones introduced his new poetical theory. This key passage from the Essay on the Poetry of the Eastern Nations (Essay I) contains his provocative ideas about oriental poetry and also mentions his climatic theory:

> Now it is certain that the genius of every nation is not a little affected by their climate; for, whether it be that the immoderate heat disposes the Eastern people to a life of indolence, which gives them full leisure to cultivate their talents, or whether the sun has a real influence on the imagination (as one would suppose that the Ancients believed, by their making Apollo the god of poetry); whatever be the cause, it has always been remarked, that the Asiaticks excel the inhabitants of our colder regions in the liveliness of their fancy, and the richness of their invention.
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> To carry this subject one step farther: as the Arabians are such admirers of beauty, and as they enjoy such ease and leisure, they must naturally be susceptible of that passion, which is the true spring and source of agreeable poetry; and we find, indeed, that love has a greater share in their poems than any other passion: it seems to be always uppermost in their minds, and there is hardly an elegy, a panegyrick, or even a satire, in their language, which does not begin with the complaints of an unfortunate, or the exultations of a successful, lover. (46)

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(44) Walter Raleigh, Johnson on Shakespeare. (London, 1949), p. 21.

(45) Ibid. p. 16.

(46) Jones, Works, 1807, X, pp. 338-339.

Jones's climatic theory asserts that oriental peoples have a natural aptitude for poetry as a result of their peculiar temperament, wrought by a favourable climate. Jones claims that Asian writers have certain advantages over those in the West, They have rich and abundant material to use for imagery; they enjoy a soft, warm climate; they are surrounded by and enjoy an agreeable tranquillity; and very early in life they consecrate their leisure to poetry.

In this passage, and throughout the whole essay, it is noticeable that Jones takes the desert Arabs as his prime example, but that he also includes the Persians and Turks in his generalization. He justifies this by saying that, since Persian poetry is strongly influenced by Arabic, and Turkish is also related to it, what is true of the Arabs is true of the others as well. This is, of course, an over-simplification on his part, but it makes possible his presentation of oriental poetry, not merely Arabic poetry, as an ideal in the typical pastoral genres.

The lyrical expression of passion is, the essay asserts, 'the true spring and source of agreeable poetry.' Implicitly, the lyric is the supreme poetic genre, since it is regarded as being much in the Arabs' favour that 'a panegyrick, or even a satire, in their language' has its ghazal, or personal love, element. This judgement is effectively a criticism of the neo-classical hierarchy of genres which accorded superiority to the epic rather than the lyric.

Jones's Essay is usually considered to be one of the most important articles on pastoral written in the latter part of the eighteenth century. He describes the wandering life of the Arab tribes, with the consequent frequent separation of lovers, and the poetry that has grown up around this theme. He also describes the images drawn from nature and from the existing pastoral life and asserts that pastoral poetry is more alive in the East than in Europe.

Through discussing Arabian pastoral, Jones sought to bring his contemporaries to an awareness of the genre as a living form, appealing by its simplicity to all. He puts some emphasis in this essay upon the moral purposes of pastoral, but his chief interest in it appears to be that felt by the writers of the village literature, an interest in the loves, the trials, and the triumphs of ordinary country people.

At the time when Jones was trying to revive the form, pastoral was out of favour with a number of writers. The reason for this disfavour was largely that writers of pastoral often used classical traditions and conventions quite indiscriminately, thereby rendering the genre sterile. Dr. Johnson voiced his disapproval of Gay's use of the pastoral tradition in 'Dione': 'Such scenes please barbarians in the dawn of literature, and children in the dawn of life; but will be for the most part thrown away as men grow wise, and nations grow learned.' (47) His

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(47) Samuel Johnson, Lives of the Poets. 2 vols. (London, 1967), II, p. 69.

judgement of Lyttelton's Progress of Love similarly showed his dislike, 'The Verses cant of shepherd and flocks, and crooks dressed with flowers ... It is sufficient blame to say that it is pastoral.' (~~51~~ 48)

Johnson's hostility displayed a weariness with classical conventions, but also a longing for something more natural than pastoral seemed to allow.

One suggested way out of the classical dead-end was to turn to native English literary resources. This was advocated by Allan Ramsay, for example, in the preface to The Ever Green:

> The morning rises (in the Poets [sic] Description) as she does in the Scottish Horizon. We are not carried to Greece or Italy for a Shade, a Stream or a Breeze, the Groves rise in our own Valleys; the Rivers flow from our own Fountains, and the Winds blow upon our own Hills. I find no Fault with those Things, as they are in Greece or Italy: but with a Northern Poet for fetching his Materials from these Places, in a Poem, of which his own Country is the Scene; as our Hymners to the Spring and Makers of Pastorals frequently do. (~~52~~ 49)

Like Ramsay, Jones was not satisfied with mere condemnation. Rather, he declared that the traditional mythology and imagery could easily be replaced by new and fresh imagery from Asian literatures: 'Arabia ... seems to be the only country in the world, in which we can properly lay the scene of pastoral poetry.' (~~53~~ 50)

(~~51~~ 48) Samuel Johnson, Lives of the Poets. 2 vols. (London, 1967), II, pp. 461-471.

(~~52~~ 49) Allan Ramsay, The Ever Green. 2 vols. (Glasgow, 1875), I, pp. vii-viii.

(~~53~~ 50) Jones, Works, 1807, X, p. 329.

The Arabs themselves emerge in the Essay as something akin to noble savages. They are too civilized to be completely savage, but their ancient simplicity embodies a pastoral ideal, and later, when Jones made his translation of Moallakat, he repeatedly used the words 'noble' and 'pastoral' when referring to them. It was Jones's principle that noble customs, a leisurely life and happy natural surroundings produce fine poetry, and for him the Arabs represented the ideal exemplification of this fact. In the Essay, he describes them roaming free on their swift stallions, keeping watch over their flocks and camels, and then, in their abundant leisure, composing beautiful poetry. Furthermore, he explains that it is the quality of the surrounding nature that determines the quality of the natural images in poetry: 'It is certain that all poetry receives a very considerable ornament from the beauty of natural images.' (51) It is important that, as in Arabia, the natural objects of the poet's environment should be sublime and beautiful, 'because in that case his 'comparisons, metaphors, and allegories are so likewise.' (52) The concept of the sublime, in the sense of creating exaltation of feeling, is very important, as may be seen in the following passage:

> ... we must not believe that the Arabian poetry can please only by its descriptions of beauty; since the gloomy and terrible objects, which produce the sublime, when they are aptly described are no where more common than in the Desert and Stony Arabia's; and, indeed, we see nothing so frequently painted by the poets of those countries, as wolves and lions, precipices and forests, rocks and wildernesses. (53)

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(51) Jones, Works, 1807, X, pp. 331-332.

(52) Ibid. p. 333.

(53) Ibid. p. 333.

Thus, in Jones's view, Arabian poetry has a quality far more important than beauty: it achieves a consonance between the flow of nature and the flow of poetry. Furthermore, this consonance is able to harmonise both 'cool fountains, green bowers, and black-eyed girls' (54) as well as 'wolves, lions, precipices, and forests, rocks and wildernesses,' (55) and in the co-presence in Jones's exotic landscape of a decorously flowing river and a wilder, natural scene we may sense an anticipation of that spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling characteristic of Wordsworth. Nonetheless, Jones's conception is a truly harmonious one, and this fact shows/

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(54) Jones, Works. 1807, X p. 337.

(55) Ibid. p. 333.

that, although Jones in some ways sought to undermine neo-classical theory, his underlying habits of thought were essentially neo-classical.

Jones's importance in the history of poetic theory is well described by M.H. Abrams, in a discussion of 'Essay II' of the 1772 volume, 'On the Arts Commonly Called Imitative.' In M.H. Abrams's view, the argument expressed there reveals Jones to be one of the 'few writers of the latter part of the century' who 'mark themselves off from their contemporaries because they deliberately set out to revise the bases of the neo-classic theory of poetry.' Abrams finds in 'Essay II':

> a conjunction of all the tendencies we have been tracing: the ideas drawn from Longinus, the old doctrine of poetic inspiration, recent theories of the emotional and imaginative origin of poetry, and a major emphasis on the lyric form and on the supposedly primitive and spontaneous poetry of oriental nations. (56)

In the conclusion to his chapter on Expressive theory, Abrams says: 'It was Jones's distinction to be the first writer in England to weave these threads into an explicit and orderly reformulation of the nature and criteria of poetry and of the poetic genres.' He also finds it notable that Jones opens his essay by rejecting unequivocally the 'assertion of Aristotle that all poetry consists in imitation,' one of those maxims, he thinks, 'repeated a thousand times, for no other reason, than because they once dropped from the pen of a superior genius!' (57)

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(56) M.H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition. (New York, 1958), p. 87.

(57) Ibid. p. 87.

In his efforts to discard Aristotle's theory of imitation, Jones draws our attention to what goes in the mind when we read a fine poem, listen to a piece of exquisite music, or see a very fine picture. Jones never attempts to analyse or grapple with what underlies Aristotle's theory of imitation. Rather, his approach to the fine arts is purely psychological; the object of his consideration is the mind as it is when affected by the finest works of art. He declares: 'It must be clear to any one, who examines what passes in his own mind, that he is affected by the finest poems, pieces of musick and pictures, upon a principle, which whatever it be, is entirely different from imitation.' (58 62) What emerges as a criterion of judgement in the fine arts, then, is the reaction of the individual; the criticism becomes vigorously subjective.

Jones's approach to the problem of Aristotle's theory of poetry as imitation is a simple one, perhaps over-simple. By 'imitation' Jones seems to understand copying, or slavishly following the example of real life. He considers that for painting there is a model which can be imitated, but argues that the finest painting transcends the limits of the model. In other words, the model becomes the medium of expression for the painter's throughts, ideas and imagination, and therefore the painting ceases to be a mere imitation. In the case of poetry and music, however, Jones will allow even less importance to imitation: what models, he asks, are there to be imitated by the poet or musician? He asserts that there are countries in which all kinds of imitation are forbidden by law, and yet there are poets, musicians there.

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58 62) (Sir) William Jones, "Essay on the Arts, Commonly Called Imitative", Works. 1807, X, pp. 361-362.

Their work must therefore be based on some principle other than that of imitation:

> Whatever be said of painting, it is probable that poetry and musick had a nobler origin; and, if the first language of man was not both poetical and musical, it is certain, at least, that in countries where no kind of imitation seems to be much admired, there are poets and musicians both by nature and by art: as in some Mahometan nations; where sculpture and painting are forbidden by the laws, where dramatick poetry of every sort is wholly unknown, yet, where the pleasing arts of expressing the passions in verse, and of enforcing that expression by melody, are cultivated to a degree of enthusiasm. (63) 59

Jones does admit that poetry and music have the power of imitating the manners of men and several objects of nature. However, their greatest effect is not produced by imitation, but by a very different principle which lurks in the deepest recesses of our mind. It is an irresistibly compelling force, which rouses the passions and involves the whole soul in great creative activity, thereby producing the finest kinds of poetry and music:

> It seems probable then, that poetry was originally no more than a strong, and animated expression of the human passions, of joy and grief, love and hate, admiration and anger, sometimes pure and unmixed, sometimes variously modified and combined. (64) 60

If one examines closely what Jones says about poetry, it is apparent that he largely ignores the Aristotelian genres in his definition. He is concerned with lyrical poetry, and he pays scant attention to epic, tragedy and comedy, which are the categories that Aristotle had in mind when he described poetry as imitative. As Abrams points out, Jones makes the lyric

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(63) 59 (Sir) William Jones, "Essay on the Arts, Commonly Called Imitative", Works. 1807, X, p. 362.

(64) 60 Ibid. p. 363.

not only the original, primitive form of poetic utterance, but also 'The prototype for poetry as a whole', thus he expands 'what had occasionally been proposed as the differentia of one poetic species into the defining attribute of the genus.' As (Jones) says, 'Lyric poetry is what poetry really was among the Hebrews, the Greeks and Romans, the Arabs and Persians.' (~~65~~ 61)

Lyrical poetry, or 'original and native poetry,' as Jones defines it, is 'the language of the violent passions, expressed in exact measure, with strong accents and significant words.' (~~66~~ 62) This true poetry represents the 'spontaneous outpourings' of a human being in the grip of some violent passion. Although Jones regards his poetic theory as being dramatically opposed to Aristotle's, there is in fact a comparison to be made here. One aspect of Aristotle's imitation theory is that poetry imitates what is universal, for the passions of all men are universally the same, though their manifestation may vary from one individual to another. Jones would substitute the word expression for imitation but the substance of the two theories is essentially the same.

Jones concludes his essay by stating that 'the finest parts of poetry, music and painting, are expressive of the passions, and operate on our minds by sympathy,' and that 'the inferior parts of them are descriptive of natural objects, and affect us chiefly by substitution.' He describes the ways in which the beautiful and the sublime may be produced:

(~~65~~ 61) Abrams, Mirror ..... pp. 87-88.

Jones, Works. 1807, X, p. 372.

(~~66~~ 62) Jones, Works. 1807, X, p. 371.

> The expressions of love, pity, desire, and the tender passions, as well as the descriptions of objects that delight the senses, produce in the arts what we call the beautiful; but that hate, anger, fear, and the terrible passions, as well as objects, which are unpleasing to the senses, are productive of the sublime, when they are aptly expressed, or described. (63)

These were radical views at the time when Jones propounded them, and they helped to institute an original and potentially very fruitful movement in the study of literature. His essay has the character of a proto-Romantic manifesto, and some of the pronouncements he made in it, especially on poetic language, style and the origin of poetry, anticipated and perhaps influenced the views of the best-known Romantic poets. (64 ~~68~~)

As we have already seen with Jones's views concerning the harmony of art with nature, however, his critical theory was by no means a total departure from neo-classical principles. Although his argument includes more exotic supporting evidence, yet it is in many respects merely an extension of views expressed by other exponents of anti-mimetic theory, and builds like them, upon a western classical base. Thus, Jones constructed his Latin Commentaries on Asiatic poetry along the same lines as Bishop Lowth's 1753 Latin Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews. In Lowth's view, Hebrew poetry is inimitable: it represents 'a body of literature to which the constricting rules of the neo-classical system did not apply.' (65 ~~69~~)

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(63) Jones, Works. 1807, X, pp. 379-380.

(64 ~~68~~) V. de Sola Pinto, "Sir William Jones and English Literature", Bulletin of School of Oriental and African Studies. (London, 1946), XI, p. 690.

(65 ~~69~~) J.W.H. Atkins, English Literary Criticism 17th and 18th Centuries. (London, 1966), p. 189.

The Commentaries represents Jones's most ambitious critical work. He amassed most of the material he needed in 1767, and completed the work in 1769. However, prompted by feelings of mental immaturity, he did not publish it until 1774. It contains: a poem, a summary of six books, the books themselves, and an appendix; the appendix which consists of a testament from the Persian, a dialogue and some poems in Latin and Greek. He wrote in Latin, justifying this decision by saying that the use of this universal language would enable him to be read all over Europe.

In the first book of Commentaries, Jones asserts that, although some men consider Asian poetry uncivilised, it possesses some qualities in which European literature is deficient. He then rehearses many of the arguments which we have already found in his essay 'On the Poetry of the Eastern Nations,' about how Asian temperament and climate are favourable to poetry. He proposes to consider the poetry of all the nations of Asia, with special emphasis on that of the Persian, Arab and Turkish peoples. He points out that many of the Greek lyric poets were born in Asia Minor, and declares that Greek poetry has much in common with that of Arabia and Persia.

In the second book of Commentaries, Jones discusses Asian metre, the Arabic Idyll and Persian Ode. His treatment of metre is comprehensive; he compares Arabic metre with Hebrew metre, and he correctly deduces the important conclusion that Arabic poetry derives its unity from metre. In the Traite too, he makes sweeping generalizations about the metres employed by Asian authors; he declares that these Asian poets have an advantage over those in the West, because of the ease and variety of the metres which they use. They have all the metrical quantities and variations of which Pindar

gives examples, but with the distinction that, as they have more long than short syllables, they usually replace the lively and animated with the grave and ceremonious. Jones also discusses rhyme, which he says is a very ancient feature of Arab poetry. However, he goes on to say that rhyme does not ~~control~~ exercise the same degree of constraint upon ~~the sense of~~ Asian verses as it does in those of Europe, because the languages of Asia are so exceptionally ~~very~~ rich in words with similar endings. Jones points out that in some of the longest Arabic poems one finds the same rhyme maintained throughout.

Jones considers two standard forms of Asian poetry, the Kasidah and the love poem, ghazal. The Kasidah is an Arabic or Persian form, very close to the eclogue, and he compares it with eclogues of Theocritus and Virgil. The love poem, ghazal, is the most important among the Persians, where it is marked by a high degree of polish, and Hafiz is described by Jones as the greatest exponent of the genre.

Jones discusses the figures and diction of Asian poetry in book three of the Commentaries. Asian poetry derives its materials generally from five sources: nature, common life, religion, history and fable. For an adequate understanding of Asian poetry, a reader, according to Jones should always keep in mind these five elements.

He considers the principal types of subject-matter in Asian poetry in book four of the Commentaries, listing them under the sub-titles: 'of Heroic Poetry', 'of Funeral Poetry', 'of Moral Poetry', 'of Love Poetry', 'of Praise', 'of Vituperation', and 'of Description'. Jones then discusses the art of poetical description, quoting verses from an anthology of Arabic poetry; and concludes the chapter with sample descriptions of flowers,

gardens, pleasant situations and human beauty. He discusses fully the Persian fable of the rose and the nightingale, a fable which, as we shall see later, was used by some of the romantic poets.

Jones devotes book five of the Commentaries to the discussion of various Arabic and Turkish poets. After listing some of the celebrated Arabic poets, he passes on to the Persians, declaring that, after Ferdausi, Hafiz and Sadi, the most famous Persian poet is Geleleddin Balki, and finding Jami to be the most elegant poet of modern Persia. He declares that a book on 'the lives of the Asian poets' would be of great value; and he further asserts that plain texts of the Asian classics should be issued order that scholars may gradually interpret, emend and illustrate them.

Jones treats Asian diction in book six of the Commentaries. He describes it as modulated and rhythmical. He attributes the ignorance of Europeans about Asian literature to disparaging remarks about it by European crtics. As a result the Europeans are hardly aware of the Plato, Socrates, Aristotle, and Demosthenes of Asia. Jones discusses the three characteristic styles of Asian writing, which he calls the sublime, the beautiful and the plain.

Jones advanced his theories about the Eastern peoples, their poetry and imagery, and was to go on urging the study of oriental literature. He was already recognized as a great oriental scholar. He was elected Fellow of the Royal Society on April 30, 1772. The same fame also opened to him the door of Johnson's famous Literary Club: 'To this society William Jones aged 26, in the spring of 1773, was elected.' (66)

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(66) L.F. Powell, "Sir William Jones and The Club", Bulletin of School of Oriental and African Studies. (London, 1946), XI, p. 818.

Among the members of the club, Edward Gibbon's interest in the East can aptly be compared with that of Jones. Gibbon had read Jones's Commentary on Asiatic Poetry, for he wrote:

> I have pursued with much pleasure Sir William Jones's Latin Commentary on Asiatic Poetry ... which was composed in the youth of that wonderful linguist. At present, in the maturity of his taste and judgement, he would perhaps abate of the fervent, and even partial, praise which he has bestowed on the Orientals. (~~71~~ 67)

Gibbon also knew of Jones's work on Nadir Shah, for he acknowledged his indebtedness to it in the notes to The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. Also mentioned in The Decline and Fall, is Jones's Moallakat, about which Gibbon wrote, in notes to his chapter on the growth of the Arabian Empire: 'the seven poems of the Caaba have been published by Sir William Jones; but his honourable mission to India has deprived us of his own notes, far more interesting than the obscure and obsolete text.' (~~72~~ 68)

The Decline and Fall became an important source of information about the East, and its popularity gave wide publicity to Jones's work, so that Jones in turn paid tribute to Gibbon:

> I have more than once sought; without having been so fortunate as to obtain, a proper opportunity of thanking you very sincerely for the elegant compliment which you pay me, in a work abounding in elegance of all kinds.
>
> My Seven Arabian Poets will see the light before next winter and be proud to wait upon you in their English dress. Their wild productions will, I ~~fa~~latter myself, be thought interesting, and not venerable merely on account of their antiquity. (~~73~~ 69)

(~~71~~ 67) Edward Gibbon, The Decline and Fall of The Roman Empire. ed. J.B. Bury, 6 vols. (London, 1897-1898), III, p. 33.

(~~72~~ 68) Ibid. V, p. 325.

(~~73~~ 69) Jones, Letters. II, p. 480.

As Jones had given great publicity to Arabic literature in his numerous writings on oriental poetry, it was almost inevitable that he would be drawn to the Moallakat. His translation of this great literary classic of pre-Islamic Arabia was another important contribution to oriental studies. Moallakat was published in the summer of 1782, before his departure for India. We know that he had worked on it for some little time, however, since he wrote to his friend Edmund Cartwright on 4th September 1780 that he was engaged on: 'Two little works ... and the second a dissertation On the Manners of the Arabians before the Time of Mahomet, illustrated by seven poems, which were written in letters of gold, and suspended in the temple at Mecca, about the beginning of the sixth century.' (~~74~~ 70). The second work which Jones describes here was the Moallakat, a collection of seven poems selected by the critics attached to an acadamy of poetry which used to assemble at certain times in a place called Ocadh. Poets would meet, and read their poems, and the seven that were judged to be the best were written in letters of gold and hung on the gate of the temple of Mecca, in recognition of their excellence. The word 'Moallakat' means: things that are suspended. It is not difficult to understand why Jones chose to translate Moallakat; it was a task which must have both appealed to him and in a sense, forced itself upon him. Arabic was the first non-western language which Jones had studied after Hebrew, and, unlike Persian and Turkish, he had studied it with a native instructor. Thus he must have felt himself reasonably well equipped to undertake the task. Also, it was a very worthwhile task. As we have already seen, Jones came to believe that Arabia is 'the only country in the world in which we can properly lay

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(~~74~~ 70) Jones, Letters. I, p. 428.

the scene of pastoral poetry', (71 ~~75~~), and creating a new, revivified pastoral was one of his over-riding concerns. He had said earlier that he hoped someone else would soon present these great Arabic poems in English dress (72 ~~76~~). Yet no one had taken up this suggestion, so that in 1782 it was Jones's own translation which was published and which greatly enhanced Jones's reputation as an orientalist. Jones had two Arabic copies of the Moallakat on which to base his translation. One copy had been made for him from a manuscript in Aleppo, and he checked this copy against another in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge. In addition to the translations, Jones included Roman character transliterations and introductions to each poem, and he gave accounts of the authors of the poems: Amirolkais, Tarafa, Zohair, Lebeid, Antara, Amru and Hareth. (73 ~~77~~)

As is the case with any translation, Jones's work has its limitations. Apart from the difficulties inherent in any translation, it is widely recognized that 'few Arabic books translate well.' (74 ~~78~~) Also, although Jones had had help in learning the language from a native speaker, he did not really have an intimate knowledge of the literary Arabic in which the Moallakat are written. The Syrian who had originally read Arabic with him in Oxford was no scholar; all that he could do was to translate Galland's version of The Arabian Nights into Arabic, so that Jones could retranslate it.

(71 ~~75~~) Jones, Works. 1807, X, p. 329.

(72 ~~76~~) Ibid. p. 204.

(73 ~~77~~) Jones, Works. 1807, X, pp. 1-193.

(74 ~~78~~) Ibn Hazem, The Ring of The Dove. trans. A.J. Arberry, (London, 1953), p. 13.

Nevertheless, inaccuracies resulting from lack of knowledge on Jones's part are rare. What is more striking is the way that Jones sometimes, and obviously with full knowledge of what he was doing, modified descriptions in order to make them more fitting for their English audience. An example, of this may be seen, in nasib, the opening dramatic scene in which the author, Imru-al-Kais, tells his friend how he had sat on Onaiza's clothes when she was swimming, so that, finally, she had been forced to present herself nude before him. Imru(Amr) gives a passionate, detailed description of the body of his mistress, the details conforming to the contemporary Arab conception of beauty, Onaiza being described as immensely corpulent. However, when Jones translated this passage into English, he changed the description completely, in order to convey a sense of beauty to an English reader: Onaiza thus becomes slender, tall and well-proportioned. (~~79~~ 75)

The form in which Jones chose to render these poems into English is non-metrical. It is cadenced, Biblical prose, which, though dignified, is not always formal and is capable of being passionate. The adoption of the prose form obviously had the basic purpose of making Jones's task easier for him. He had, after all, a limited amount of time, especially if, as he originally planned, he was going to append notes and commentaries. In addition, by opting out of the difficult task of rendering it metrically, he was enabled to stay closer to the meaning of the original. In form, the Arab poems are quite unlike any forms existing in English poetry, and therefore finding an appropriate metre and rhyme for them would have represented a much greater problem than in the case of the short poems

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(~~79~~ 75) Jones, Works. 1807, X, p. 13, (Stanza, 29.)

by Hafiz or Mesihi. The Moallakat are, on average, about 85 lines of hemistiches in length, and they have a single rhyme, usually feminine, which is maintained throughout. In addition, the metres are complex and variable, and the subtle nuances they express are inimitable in any European language. Jones seems to have felt the poems deeply enough to have sensed that any available English metre or rhyme would have betrayed the originals more profoundly than a prose rendering. Also he wanted to show how different these poems were from anything his readers already knew, and it was only by breaking out of English poetic conventions that Jones could do this. By rendering these poems in the way that he did, together with prefatory remarks and transliterations, Jones enabled the interested reader to understand the meaning, and get some idea of the sound of the originals. Thus, such a reader could judge for himself how different these poems were from any English poetry he knew.

While discussing the Moallakat, it is instructive, since it gives us a picture of Jones's development, to compare a passage from the Moallaka of Lebid, which Jones translated in couplets for his 1772 Essay on Eastern Poetry, with the same passage as Jones later rendered it in his more literal prose version of the whole Moallakat collection:

1772:

But ah! thou knowst not in what youthful play
Our nights, beguil'd with pleasure, swam away;
Gay songs, and cheerful tales, deceiv'd the time,
And circling goblets made a tuneful chime;
Sweet was the draught, and sweet the blooming maid,
Who touch'd her lyre beneath the fragrant shade;
We sip'd till morning purpled ev'ry plain;
The damsels slumber'd, but we sip'd again:
The awakening birds, that sung on every tree 76
Their early notes, were not so blithe as we. (~~80~~)

(~~80~~ 76) Jones, Works. 1807, X, pp. 342-343.

1782:

57 Ah! thou knowst not how many serene nights, with sweet sport and mirthful revelry,
58 I pass in gay conversation; and often return to the flag of the Wine-merchant, when he spreads it in the air, and sells his wine at a high price:
59 I purchase the old liquor at a dear rate in dark leathern bottles long reposited, or in casks, black with pitch, whose seals I break, and then fill the cheerful goblet.
60 How often do I quaff pure wine in the morning, and draw towards me the fair lutanist, whose delicate fingers skilfully touch the strings!
61 I rise before the cock to take my morning draught, which I sip again and again, when the sleepers of the dawn awake. (81)

What is most striking here, is the greater vigour and more specific detail of the later rendering, and the relative absence of a lulling, hypnotic atmosphere. In the couplets of the earlier version, there is a sense of rather pleasantly monotonous sweetness, and the rugged quality of desert life is replaced by a more conventional pastoral delicacy. By omitting the first person singular (I pass ... I purchase ... I break ... I quaff ... I rise) in the earlier version, Jones lost the bold, boastful, individualistic note of the Arab poet. The loss was partly the result of the form Jones chose to employ, but there is also no doubt that, at the time he wrote it, this earlier version represented Jones's conception of the Arab world. It is evident from the first Essay that the Arabian world Jones believed in during the early 1770's was in large measure a rather vague, idealized pastoral fantasy.

It is worth noting that Jones seeks to bring his contemporaries to a recognition of a pastoral, even though it be in Arabia, as a living form, appealing by its simplicity to all. He tries to explore new types of legend

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(81) Jones, Works. 1807, X, pp. 67-68.

and mythology derived from non-classical sources. This exploration, as V. de Sola Pinto has pointed out:

> was really part of a great European movement of thought in the eighteenth century which emancipated the Western nations from the belief that the only sources of light and learning were to be found in Graeco-Roman civilisations. (82) 78

Another aspect of Jones's oriental activities is his life and work in India between the years 1783 and 1794, when he held a post as judge in the Supreme Court. After reaching Calcutta, Jones, trying to settle down to his new life, founded, in 1784, the Asiatic Society of Bengal. Warren Hastings, the Governor-General, was asked to be the president, but, when he declined, Jones was unanimously elected. He set the tradition of delivering annual discourses to the society. The first discourse he delivered was "A Discourse on the Institution of a Society for Inquiring into the History, Civil and Natural, the Antiquities, Arts, Sciences, and Literature of Asia'. He urged the members to learn as many oriental languages as they could in order to facilitate their research. About the birth of the society S.N. Mukherjee wrote:

> The birth of the Asicatic Society is a milestone in the history of oriental studies. By establishing it Jones helped to usher in the age of scientific specialization, by forming a society which should study the Asians at close quarters and drew conclusions about their social, political and economic institutions from the observations of its members. (83) 79

In the opening paragraph of the first discourse Jones said:

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(82) 78 V. de Sola Pinto, "Sir William Jones and English Literature", Bulletin of School of Oriental and African Studies. (London, 1946), XI, p. 688.

(83) 79 S.N. Mukherjee, Sir William Jones: A Study in Eighteenth Century British Attitudes to India. (Cambridge, 1968), p. 83.

> When I was at sea last August, on my voyage to this country, which I had long and ardently desired to visit, I found one evening, on inspecting the observations of the day, that India lay before us, and Persia on our left, whilst a breeze from Arabia blew nearly on our stern. A situation so pleasing in itself, and to me so new, could not fail to awaken a train of reflections in a mind, which had already been accustomed to contemplate with delight the eventful histories and agreeable fictions of this eastern world. It gave me inexpressable pleasure to find myself in the midst of so noble an amphitheatre, almost encircled by the vast regions of Asia, which has ever been esteemed the nurse of sciences, the inventress of delightful and useful arts, the scene of glorious actions, fertile in the production of human genius, abounding in natural wonders, and infinitely diversified in the forms of religion and government, as well as in the features and complexions, of men. I could not help remarking, how important and extensive a field was yet unexplored, and how many solid advantages unimproved. (80 ~~84~~)

At this time Jones wrote the first of his Indian hymns 'A Hymn to Camedo', and this was published in London, along with his first 'Anniversary Discourse' and 'The Charge to the Grand Jury' which he gave as a judge of the Supreme Court. These were immediately popular among those who were interested in oriental matters, and the Monthly Review praised the volume highly. (81 ~~85~~)

For some time Jones's health had not been good; but he decided to take a trip up the Ganges towards Benares, where he hoped to collect material connected with Hindu antiquity. On reaching Benares, Jones conversed through interpreters with some Hindu scholars, but gathered little material about Hindu religion and law, and gained no access to the

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(80 ~~84~~) (Sir) William Jones, A Discourse on the Institution of a Society for Enquiring into the History, Civil and Natural, the Antiquities, Arts, Sciences, and Literature of Asia, delivered at Calcutta, January 15th, 1784; A Charge to the Grand Jury, at Calcutta from December 4th, 1783; and a Hymn to Camedo, translated from the Hindu into Persian, and from the Persian into English. (London, 1784), pp. 3-4.

(81 ~~85~~) Monthly Review. (London, 1784), LXXI, p. 354.

Manava-dharma-Sastra, which was also known as the Ordinance of Manu. The book was sacred and Jones, as a foreigner, could not touch or even see it. Jones's hope of translating the book, first into Persian and then into English, was therefore never realised. It was at this stage that Jones realized that, in order to fulfil properly his duties as a judge, he would have to learn Sanskrit. He thought first of engaging a Brahman, since they were the traditional keepers of Sanskrit manuscripts. But he found that not a single Brahman was willing to be his teacher, since they considered that the reading of any sacred book by a non-believing Christian was sacrilegious. After much effort Jones at last found a Hindu physician who was prepared to help him in this matter, and he started his first Sanskrit lessons in 1785. In spite of initial difficulties, he made good progress, and he was soon able to employ his growing knowledge of the language to delve into the secrets of Hindu mythology and religion. Then, on the basis of what he learnt, he composed more hymns to Hindu deities: the hymns to Narayena, Sarasvati, Ganga, Indra and Surya.

In the 'Second Anniversary Discourse' of 24th February, 1785, Jones again urged the Europeans to try to understand the customs and culture of the people of India, for the sake of better relations and more efficient administration. He declared that Oriental history, sciences and arts should be explored for that purpose. Indian botany, he said, should be treated as a special subject of study. He also sought to compile a full bibliography of oriental books.

Jones now wrote 'The Enchanted Fruit; or the Hindu wife, an Antediluvian Tale', translated some tales and fables of the Persian poet

Nizami, some Sanskrit pieces, one Arabic piece, and a Persian verse-fable, and these, together with the six hymns and other short pieces, were published in Asiatic Miscellany by Francis Gladwin in 1785. The demand for copies of this volume increased so much that there was a reprint in 1787.

Jones's Sanskrit studies led him to one of his most famous and epoch-making deductions, which established the foundations of comparative linguistics. He declared in his 'Third Anniversary Discourse' to the Society, on 2nd February, 1786:

> The Sanskrit language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either, yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs and the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident; so strong indeed, that no philologer could examine them all three, without believing them to have sprung from some common source. (82 ~~86~~)

Praising Jones's linguistic achievement Friedrich Schlegel wrote:

> Sir William Jones ... by establishing the affinity between the Indian language and the Latin, Greek, German and Persian, first threw a light on this obscrure study, and consequently on the earliest popular history, which before his time was everywhere dark and confused. (83 ~~87~~)

Jones's admiration for everything Indian was boundless. He enjoyed reading the Hindu mythology; and the Mahabharata, the Hindu epic, made a deep impression on him. He was untiring in his scholarly pursuits, which consisted of Persian studies, editorial work and Sanskrit studies. He made good progress in Sanskrit, and read the Hitopadesa, translating it while he

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(82 ~~86~~) Jones, Works. 1807, III, p. 34.

(83 ~~87~~) Friedrich von Schlegel, The Aesthetic and Miscellaneous Works. trans. E.J. Millington, (London, 1849), p. 464.

read it as a kind of literary exercise. This was his first translation from Sanskrit. He did not himself think of publishing this version, which was primarily an exercise, but it was published after his death. (~~88~~ 84)

Once Jones was able to speak Sanskrit with a measure of fluency, he found that the Hindu scholars who had earlier been reluctant to co-operate with him, were now ready to help him. With their help, he discovered in Sanskrit literature the Homers, Pindars and Platos of the East; and in Kalidasa, who had written the wonderful Sakuntala, he found an oriental Shakespeare. At this stage he thought of orientalizing his projected epic poem Britain Discovered by introducing the Hindu mythology into its machinery. But this epic was never written.

Jones's time in India was one of intense scholarly activity. He delivered his 'Fifth Anniversary Discourse' on 21st February, 1788, and this time the Tartar civilisation was his subject. He also edited the famous love-story of Laili Majnun, a Persian poem by Hatifi. He now became more intent on the Digest of Hindu Laws which he had first thought of compiling when he was in London. He decided to begin translating The Ordinances of Maou, and to base his digest on that work. He drew up a list of Hindu pundits and Muslim Moulvis who could assist him, including two lawyers, a Hindu writer and a Muslim writer; and, as time passed, his work on the digest made good progress.

(~~88~~ 84) See Franic Johnson"s Hitopadesa. (London, 1864), p. 111.

He included in his first volume of Asiatic Researches an essay on 'The Gods of Greece, Italy and India'; and in this he made an important contribution to the study of comparative mythology. The subject of his 'Sixth Annual Discourse', given on 19th February, 1789, was the Persians, and in the same year, he translated in prose the lyric drama Gito-Goinda: or the Songs of Jayadeva. In this year, too, he published Kalidasa's Sakuntala in English as Sacontala; the Fatal Ring: An Indian Drama. It was in the preface to this work that he compared Kalidasa with Shakespeare, and urged scholars to learn Sanskrit in order to translate more dramas by Kalidasa: 'It is my anxious wish, that others may take the pains to learn Sanskrit, and may be persuaded to translate the work if Calidas.' (85 ~~89~~) His translation created great excitement all over Europe, and Friedrich Schlegel's admiration for it is representative of the universal acclaim with which it was received by European readers and scholars:

> Of all the Indian poems, so far as we are yet acquainted with them, that of Sokuntola (which has been translated with the most scrupulous extactness by Jones) is the work, which gives the best idea of Indian poetry; it is a speaking example of the story of beauty which is peculiar to the spirit of their functions. Here we see not indeed either the high and dignified arrangement, or the earnestness and strength of style which distinguish the tragedies of the Greeks. But all is animated with a deep and lovely tenderness of feeling; an air of sweetness and beauty is diffused over the whole. If the enjoyment of solitude and musing, the delight which is excited by the beauty of nature, above all, the world of plants, are here and there enlarged upon, with a gorgeous profusion of images, this is but the clothing of innocence. The composition throughout is clear and unlaboured, and the language is full of graceful simplicity. (86 ~~90~~)

(85 ~~89~~) (Sir) William Jones, Sacontala, or The Fatal Ring; an Indian Drama by Calidas. (Calcutta, 1789), 'Preface', p. x.

(86 ~~90~~) Friedrich von Schlegel, Lectures on The History of Literature Ancient and Modern. 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1818), I, pp. 211-212.

Jones's 'Seventh Anniversary Discourse' was delivered on 25th February, 1790. This time his subject was China, and many of his statements reveal his limited knowledge of the subject. A.D. Waley has shown that Jones's knowledge of China was never adequate:

> From what I have said it will be apparent that his Chinese studies were not in themselves of any importance. Their interest lies in the fact that they show here, too, as in the Zend-Avesta episode, he was incautious in his statements about the matters that lay outside his own field of study. (91) 87

The second volume of the Asiatic Researches was published in 1790, and as usual Jones had his own contribution in it: 'A Supplement to the Essay on Indian Chronology'.

He delivered the 'Eighth Anniversary Discourse' to the Society on 24th February, 1791, and 'Discourse the Ninth' on 24th February, 1792. Al Sirajiyyah and The Seasons; A Descriptive poem, were also published this year. Jones thought that Al Sirajiyyah would be a supplement to the Digest about laws of succession in Muslim families. The Seasons was prompted by his desire to acquaint the Hindus of India with the wealth of their own ancient literature. His choice was the Rtusamhara of Kalidas, a poem about the six seasons of India. He published it in Sanskrit under the title The Seasons; A Descriptive Poem, and thereby became the first European scholar to publish an original Sanskrit text. He added an advertisement to the book in English, in which he declared the book to be 'the first ever printed in Sanskrit'. He described it as an 'elegant work', declaring 'every line' to be 'exquisitely polished' and asserting that every

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(91) 87 A.D. Waley, "Sir William Jones as Sinologue", Bulletin of School of Oriental and African Studies. (London, 1946), XI, p. 842

couplet presented 'an Indian landscape, always beautiful, sometimes highly coloured, but never beyond nature'. (88 92)

At this time Jones was also working on the third volume of Asiatick Researches. Among his essays in it were 'On the Musical Modes of the Hindus', 'The Lunar Year of the Hindus', and 'On the Mystical Poetry of Persians and Hindus'. This last essay was composed during the period 1790-82, and the only one of the four not dealing directly with an Indian subject, it contained the first English translation of any part of the mystical Mathnawi, by Jalal al-Din Rumi. (89 93) Through an apt quotation from each of the theologians, Issac Barrow and Jacques Necker, both of whom held ideas essential to Vedantism and Sufism, Jones developed the principles of the two philosophical systems. These, he explained, led to the thousands of metaphors and other figures in Persian and Hindu sacred poetry. He translated distichs from several of Hafiz's odes as illustrations of the religious and secular love poetry of Sufism. (90 94)

The 'Tenth Anniversary Discourse' to the Society was delivered on 28th February, 1783. On this occasion, Jones spoke of the advantages which might be derived from the researches of the Society. There were many things yet to be explored. Oriental history, geography, astronomy, etc., presented vast fields of investigation. He himself was interested in Asiatic plants and Sanskrit chemistry books. Studies of all these things might be of great use to Europe in one way or another.

(88 92) Jones, Works. 1799, I, p. 363.

(89 93) A.J. Arberry, "Persian Jones", Asiatic Review. (London, 1944), XL, April, p. 194.

(90 94) Cannon, Oriental Jones. p. 175.

Jones published his translation of the Ordinance of Manu in 1794, at the expense of the Government. It had taken him eight years to finish the work, which defined the religious and civic duties of the Indian Hindus, and also cobtained an account of the origin of man and the world. The Monthly Review praised his style highly: 'Of the style, suffice it to say that it has attained a degree of excellence which we have seldom witnessed, in translations professedly verbal'. (91 ~~95~~). Jones delivered 'Discourse the Eleventh', his last such discourse on 20th February, 1794. This time he discussed oriental physiology, medicine, metaphysics, logic, ethics, natural philosophy, religion and mathematics, drawing his materials principally from Sanskrit sources. This discourse also showed his deep knowledge of the Vedas.

In April, 1794, he completed the editorial work for the fourth volume of Asiatick Researches, which included three of his own essays on botanical subjects: 'Additional Remarks on the Spikenard of the Ancients'; 'Botanical Observations on Select Indian Plants'; 'A Catalogue of Indian Plants' and 'On Loris, or Slow-Placed Lemur'. At the same time, overwork and a hostile climate caused a rapid deterioration in Jones's health and he died on 27th April, 1794. Cannon describes him as an 'oriental martyr':

> The West's greatest contribution to the East, he had been a kind of Oriental martyr in sacrificing his life to monumental projects designed to help the British govern India more justly. At forty-eight years of age, his life and one of the phenomenal careers of all time had been cut short, to the sorrow of the Indian people and the rest of the world. He had not been able to do everything, though he had tried and he had accomplished much. (92 ~~96~~)

(91 ~~95~~) Monthly Review, (London, 1796), XXI, p. 551.

(92 ~~96~~) Cannon, Oriental Jones. p. 184.

Jones was the first modern linguist and the first truly great advocate of the value of knowing foreign languages, especially those which reflect the cultures of the Orient. He hoped from the first that, by understanding Eastern literature and culture, it would be possible to revitalize what he felt to be the stale neo-classical traditions of English literature, and his direct influence on Romantic poets like Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Southey, Moore and others was almost certainly partly responsible for the changes in poetry which occurred.

Oriental studies were highly esteemed in the last decades of the eighteenth century. Wordsworth wrote to Matthews on 23rd November, 1791: 'My uncle, the clergyman, proposed to me a short time ago to begin a course of Oriental literature, thinking that was the best field for a person to distinguish himself in, as a man of letters'. (97) Because of other preoccupations, however, Wordsworth never undertook this projected oriental study. Although he does not mention Jones in his journals, correspondence or published writings, Cannon thinks that the wide popularity of Jones must have led Wordsworth into some acquaintance with him:

> Certainly it is difficult to read 'On the Arts Commonly Called Imitative' without the realization that Jones's definition of poetry, the idea of poetry as the voice of nature, and the view of a deliberately simple style as the means to the expression of man's sympathy and passions are points essential to Wordsworth's Preface to the second edition of Lyrical Ballads. (98)

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(97) William and Dorothy Wordsworth, The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth. ed. Ernest De Selincourt, 2nd ed. revised by C.L. Shaver, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1967-1970), I, p. 62.

(98) Garland Cannon, "The Literary Place of Sir William Jones, (1746-1794)", Journal of the Asiatic Society. (London, 1960), II, No. 1. p. 55.

Coleridge certainly knew of Sir William Jones and his works, since he mentions him directly in his 'Opus Maximum':

> It would be more than we are entitled to expect of the human mind, if Sir W. Jones, Mr. Wilkins, etc., great and good as we know them to have been, had not overrated the merit of works, the power of understanding which, is of such rare occurrence, and so difficultly attained... I have myself paid this debt of homage on my first presentation to those foreign potentates by the aid of the great linguists above mentioned ... Their next neighbour of the North, the temple-throned infant of Thibet, with the Himālā behind and the cradle of the Ganges at his feet, conveys to my mind an impressive likeness, seems to me a pregnant symbol of the whole Brahman Theosophy. Without growth, without production! Abstract the enormous shapes and phantasms, the Himālā, the Ganges of the fancy, and what remains ? (95)

This passage clearly shows that Coleridge had a knowledge of Hindu mythology which he could not have gained except through the works of Jones. 'A Hymn to Ganga', in fact, may have been an unconscious source for the 'Kubla Khan'. Coleridge seems to have been enchanted when he was composing this poem 'by the luxurious beauty of the East', P. M. Adair writes. (96) Considering the possible influence of Jones's 'Hymn to Ganga' on 'Kubla Khan", Cannon writes:

> In the hymn, as in 'Kubla Khan', the unifying theme is the flow of magical river, from its Eastern source to its eventual merging with the ocean. The river passes through an Oriental scene described in sensuous language. Coleridge's language is never close enough to that of Jones to prove parallels in vocabulary and ideas; on the other hand, the similarities in vocabulary and constructions in both poems cannot be casually dismissed as the coincidence of an Oriental richness of style. Their very number strongly indicates that "A Hymn to Ganga" was a source for 'Kubla Khan'. (97)

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(95) John H, Muirhead, Coleridge As Philosopher. (London, 1970), pp. 283-284.

(96) Patricia M. Adair, The Waking Dream: A Study of Coleridge's Poetry. (London, 1967), p. 123.

(97) Cannon, "The Literary Place ....." p. 55-56.

In support of his argument Cannon, in another article, gives a detailed study of the possible influences of Jones's "A Hymn to Ganga' on other works of Coleridge. (~~102~~ 98)

[redacted] Byron was also well acquainted with the works of Jones, who was among three Eastern authors whom he read with the greatest interest:

'Besides Rycaut, he had read Mignot and D'Herbelot and Sir William Jones; he knew Jonathan Scott's edition of The Arabian Nights and Sale's translation of the Koran'. (~~103~~ 99) In his study of the literary sources of Byron's 'Turkish Tales', Harold Wiener asserts:

> The interest which Byron, as a child, displayed in the Near East, and which he retained until his death, was by no means accidental. The end of the eighteenth century saw ... a vast increase in the resources of Oriental scholarship, stimulated by ... the efforts of Sir William Jones. (~~104~~ 100)

Wiener goes on to describe Jones as 'the greatest Orientalist of his time', and suggests that 'Byron must have been familiar with Jones's works'. He is, however, only prepared to admit that Jones had a general influence on Byron. Referring to the thirteen-volume edition of Jones's works, he writes:

> The thirteen volumes comprise a collection of varied materials. There are many things to interest a student of Eastern traditions, and countless passages which undoubtedly would have fascinated Byron, but almost nothing there is directly connected with the Turkish Tales. (~~105~~ 101)

(~~102~~ 98) Garland, Cannon, "A New Probable Source for 'Kubla Khan'", College English. (Chicago, 1955), XVII, p. 136.

(~~103~~ 99) M.K. Joseph, Byron The Poet. (London, 1964), p. 44.

For Byron's use of the Orient, see also: Leslie A. Marchand, Byron's Poetry: A Critical Introduction. (London, 1965), pp. 60-67.

(~~104~~ 100) Harold S.L. Wiener, "Byron and the East: Literary Sources of the Turkish Tales", Nineteenth Century Studies. ed. H. Davies, W.C. De Vane and R.C. Bald, (New York, 1968), pp. 106-107.

(~~105~~ 101) Ibid. p. 106.

Later, however, Wiener asserts that Jones 'introduced many Eastern images into English for the first time', and shows that Byron 'could scarcely have' escaped the influence of some of these. What ultimately emerges from Wiener's study is that Jones's influence on Byron was in fact considerable. (~~106~~ 102)

Byron particularly liked Jones's translation of "A Persian Song of Hafiz' and once planned a visit to Persia. (~~107~~ 103) He used the fable of the nightingale and the rose, in both 'The Giaour : A Fragment of a Turkish Tale', and 'The Bride of Abydos : A Turkish Tale'. In 'The Giaour' the verses concerning the fable are as follows:

> For there the Rose, o'er crag or vale,
> Sultana of the Nightingale,
> The maid for whom his melody,
> His thousand songs are heard on high,
> Blooms blushing to her lover's tale:
> His queen, the garden queen, his Rose,
> Unbent by winds, unchill'd by snows,
> Far from the winters of the west,
> By every breeze and season blest,
> Returns the sweets by nature given
> In softest incense back to heaven;
> And grateful yields that ~~similar~~ smiling sky
> Her fairest hue and fragrant sigh. (~~108~~ 104)

In "The Bride of Abydos' Byron writes:

> This rose to clam my brother's cares
> A message from the Bulbul bears;
> It says to-night he will prolong
> For Selim's ear his sweetest song. (~~109~~ 105)

(~~106~~ 102) Harold S.L. Wiener, "Byron and The East: Literary Sources of the Turkish Tales", Nineteenth Century Studies. ed H. Davies, W.C. De Vane and R.C. Bald, (New York, 1968), p. 115.

(~~107~~ 103) Leslie L. Marchand, Byron: A Biography. 3 vols. (London, 1957), I, p. 158.

(~~108~~ 104) George Gordon, Lord Byron, "The Giaour: A Fragment of A Turkish Tale", Poetical Works. ed. F. Page, New ed., corrected by J. Jump, (London & Oxford, 1975), p. 253, Lines: 21-33.

(~~109~~ 105) Byron, "The Bride of Abydos: A Turkish Tale", Poetical Works. p. 267, Lines: 287-290.

It is noteworthy that, in both poems, Byron's use of this fable is in accordance with the Persian tradition, where the nightingale is considered as the lover, and the rose as the beloved. In 'The Bride of Abydos', besides using the word Bulbul for nightingale, Byron also writes:

> Where the light wings of Zephyr, oppress'd with perfurme,
> Wax faint o'er the gardens of Gúl in her bloom. (~~110~~ 106)

He was criticised by reviewers for using foreign words like 'Gul' in this poem, and, in fact, Byron also uses many other eastern words in his poetry, examples being: simoom, Insect queen of eastern spring, pomegranate's blossoms, Persian Atar-Gul, and Gulnare, (~~111~~ 107), and thus carries out Jones's intention of adding a new element to English poetry.

Shelley is another poet who came under the influence of Sir William Jones. According to A.M.D. Hughes, 'The Works of Sir William Jones were among the books that Shelley ordered at Tanyralt.' (~~112~~ 108) Shelley must have read Jones's works carefully, and V. de Sola Pinto also suggests that 'Dr. Lind introduced Shelley to Sir William Jones's poems when he was at Eton, and

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(~~110~~ 106) Byron, "The Bride of Abydos: A Turkish Tale", Poetical Works. p. 264, Lines: 7-8.

(~~111~~ 107) 'He came, he went, Like the Simoom', "The Giaour", Line 282.

'As rising on its purple wing
The insect queen of eastern spring,
O'er emerald meadows of Kashmeer
Invites the young pursuer near', "The Giaour", Lines: 388-391.

'The young pomegranate's blossoms strew'. "The Giaour", Line: 494.

'The persian Atar-gul's perfume', "The Bride of Abydos", I,x, Line: 270.

'And when that dark-eyed lady, young Gulnare,
Recall'd those thoughts late wandering in despair' "The Corsair", II, vii, Lines: 259-260.

(~~112~~ 108) A.M.D. Hughes, The Nascent Mind of Shelley. (Oxford, 1947), p. 185. n. 6.

Jones's works must have been among 'relations of travellers in the East' which according to Hogg, Shelley read at Oxford'. (109 ~~113~~) A reference to an Indian flower, the 'Champak', in 'The Indian Serenade', suggests that Shelley had read Jones's 'A Hymn to Indra' where Jones writes: 'To banks of Marjoram and Champac shades'. (110 ~~114~~) In the same poem Shelley also alludes to the Persian legend of the nightingale, which dies singing upon the thorn of the rose:

> The wandering airs they faint
> On the dark, the silent stream -
> The Champak odours fail
> Like sweet thoughts in a dream
> The nightingale's complaint,
> It dies upon her heart; -
> As I must on thine, 111
> Oh, beloved as thou art! (~~115~~)

Shelley also admired another poem by Jones, 'An Ode of Jami'. Persian poets introduce their names into the concluding lines of their odes, and Jami says here:

> A moving stranger in thy town no guidance can sad Jami find,
> Till this his name, rambling lay to thine all piercing sight he brings
> (117 ~~116~~)

The same device is also found in the poem of Hafiz which Jones translated, and the name appears in Jones's translation of the poem:

(109 ~~113~~) Pinto, Sir William Jones .... . p. 693.

(110 ~~114~~) Jones, Works. 1807, XIII, p. 273.

(111 ~~115~~) Percy Bysshe Shelley, The Complete Poetical Works. ed Thomas Hutchinson, (London, 1956), p. 580, Lines: 9-16.

(112 ~~116~~) Jones, Works. 1807, II, p. 501.

Gazel gufti vedur sufti,
Bea vakhosh bukhan Hafiz,
Ke ber nazmi to afshaned
Felek ikdi suriara. (~~117~~ 113).

It is possible that Shelley may have learnt of this device from Jones, for we find him using it in a non-oriental poem, 'To Jane: The Recollection':

Though thou art ever fair and kind,
The forests ever green,
Less oft is peace in Shelley's mind,
Than calm in waters, seen. (~~118~~ 114)

Shelley also became interested in the idea of studying Arabic, possibly as a result of his acquaintance with Jones's eloquent appreciation of Arabic literature in the critical essays and the Moallakat. He wrote to Claire Claimont on October 29th, 1820: 'I am going to study Arabic - for a purpose and a motive as you may conceive. I wish you would enquire for me at Florence whether there are any Arabic Grammar and Dictionary, and any other Arabic books, either printed or Manuscript, to be bought'. (~~119~~ 115).

The first four lines of Shelley's 'From the Arabic: An Imitation' do, in fact, embody eastern sentiment:

(~~117~~ 113) Jones, Works. 1807, X, 254.
Literal translation:

Thou utteredest a ghazal; and threadest pearls of (verse). Hafiz! Come and sweetly sing

That, on they verse, the sky may scatter (in thanks) the cluster of the Pleiades.
Quoted from: Shamsu-d-Din Muhammad-i-Hafiz-i Shirazi, The Divan. trans. by H.W. Clarke, (London, 1974), p. 43.

(~~118~~ 114) Shelley, "To Jane: The Recollection", Poetical Works, p. 670, Lines: 85-88.

(~~119~~ 115) P.B. Shelley, The Letters. ed Frederick L. Jones, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1964), II, p. 243.

My faint spirit was sitting in the light
Of thy looks, my love;
It panted for thee like the hind at noon
For the brooks, my love. (116 ~~120~~)

As R.M. Hewitt points out, 'the extension of the first rhyme' in this poem 'may have been caught from Jones: it has the genuine Persian accent'. (117 ~~121~~)

The poem is, however, an adaptation of a passage in Antar, A Bedoween Romance (118 ~~122~~) by Terrick Hamilton, so its orientalism may be second-hand.

Sir William Jones's influence can be clearly seen in Shelley's Queen Mab, as E. Koeppel has shown in an article of 1900. (119 ~~123~~) The first complete edition of Jones's work appeared in 1807, and Alexander Chalmers included Jones's poems in the eighteenth volume of his The Works of the English Poets in 1810. It is therefore quite possible that Shelley had read Jones's 'Palace of Fortune; An Indian Tale', and the poem may have given him a hint for Queen Mab. In Jones's tale we find the beautiful Maia dissatisfied with her fate. A goddess called Fortune comes down to her from the skies, lulls her to sleep, and takes her to the fairy-palace which is 'on a rock of ice, by magic rais'd'. She is there shown the fates of men who have come to her with various wishes. Jones describes the arrival of the goddess:

(116 ~~120~~) Shelley, "From the Arabic: An Imitation", Poetical Works. p. 638, Lines: 1-4.

(117 ~~121~~) R.M. Hewitt, "Harmonious Jones", Essays and Studies. (London, 1942), XXVIII, p. 53.

(118 ~~122~~) Meester, Oriental Influence .... . p. 41.

(119 ~~123~~) Emil Koeppel, "Shelley's Queen Mab and Sir William Jones's Palace of Fortune." Englische Studien. (Leipzig, 1900), XXXIII, pp. 43-48.

While thus she spoke, a sudden blaze of light
Short through the clouds, and struck her dazzled sight.
She rais'd her head, astonish'd, to the skies,
And veil'd with trembling hands her aching eyes;
When through the yielding air she saw from far
A goddess gliding in a golden car,
That soon descended on the flowery lawn,
By two fair yokes of starry peacocks drawn : ...
The queen herself, too fair for mortal sight,
Sat in the centre of encircling light.
Soon with soft touch she rais'd the trembling maid,
And by her side in silent slumber laid: ...

After taking Maia to her palace and rousing her from sleep, the goddess tells her:

"Favourite of Heaven, my much-lov'd Maia, know,
"From me all joys, all eartly blessings, flow:
"Me suppliant men imperial Fortune call,
"The mighty express of yon rolling ball:
(She rais'd her finger, and the wondering maid,
At distance hung, the dusky globe survey'd,
Saw the round earth with foaming oceans vein'd,
And labouring clouds on mountain tops sustain'd.)
"To me has fate the pleasing task assign'd
"To rule the various thoughts of mankind;
"To catch each rising wish, each ardent prayer,
"And some to grant, and some to waste in air. (120)

In the same way Ianthe was sleeping when Queen Mab descended from the skies. Shelley describes the arrival of Queen Mab:

Behold the chariot of the Fairy Queen!
Celestial coursers paw the unyielding air;
Their filmy pennons at her word they furl,
And stop obedient to the reins of light:
These the Queen of Spells drew in,
She spread a charm around the spot,
And leaning graceful from the aethereal car,
Long did she gaze, and silently,
Upon the slumbering maid. (~~125~~ 121)

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(120) Jones, Works. 1807, X, pp. 212, 213, 215, 216.

(~~125~~ 121) Shelley, "Queen Mab", Poetical Works. pp. 763-764, Lines: 59-67.

Queen Mab announces herself to the wondering soul of Ianthe:

> I am the fairty MAB: to me 'tis given
> The wonders of the human world to keep:
> The secrets of the immeasurable past,
> In the unfailing consciences of men,
> Those stern, unflattering chroniclers, I find:
> The future, from the causes which arise
> In each event, I gather: not the sting. (~~1-26~~ 122)

Pinto believes that:

> Shelley's translation from the atheistic materialism of his early writings to the mystical pantheism of his mature works was largely due to his study of Sir William Jones's writings. The philosophy of Adonais has decidedly more in common with that of the fragments of the Vedas translated by Jones with the thought either of Plato or the Neoplatonists. (~~1-27~~ 123)

At the end of the poem, Shelley describes how the spirit of Adonais has merged with the Power which moves through everything:

> He is made one with Nature: there is heard
> His voice in all her music, from the moan
> Of thunder, to the song of night's sweet bird;
> He is a presence to be felt and known
> In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,
> Spreading itself where'er that Power may move
> Which has withdrawn his being to its own;
> Which wields the world with never-wearied love,
> Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.
>
> * * * * *.
>
> He is a portion of the loveliness
> Which once he made more lovely: he doth bear
> His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress
> Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there,
> All new successions to the forms they wear;
> Torturing th' unwilling dross that checks its flight
> To its own likeness, as each mass may bear;
> And bursting in its beauty and its might
> From trees and beasts and men into the Heaven's light.
>
> * * * * *

(~~1-26~~ 122) Shelley, "Queen Mab", Poetical Works. p. 765, Lines: 167-173.

(~~1-27~~ 123) Pinto, Sir William Jones and .... . p. 694.

> The One remains, the many change and pass;
> Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;
> Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
> Stains the while radiance of Eternity, [124]
> Until Death tramples it to fragments. (~~128~~)

This power resembles the godhead of Jones's Vedas, who illuminates all, who recreates all, from whom all proceed, to whom all must return. This godhead is the spiritual principle transfusing the whole world; and death gives Adonais 'fuller life by re-uniting him with' ([125] ~~129~~) this principle. Carlos Baker asserts that Shelly also derived from Jones some of that pagan mythology which he used in The Revolt of Islam. ([126] ~~130~~)

Jones's influence on Robert Southey and Thomas Moore was similarly considerable. Southey wrote to Landor on 20th May, 1808, about The Curse of Kehama:

> The mythology explains itself as it is introduced; yet because the names are not familiar, people will fancy there is a difficulty in understanding it. Sir William Jones has done nothing in introducing it so coldly and formally as he has done. They who read his poems do not remember them, and none but those who have read them can be expected to have been heard of my Divinities. ([127] ~~131~~)

This extract clearly shows how far Southey depended on Jones for information about Hindu mythology, and criticism of Jones's works was entirely directed at their style and tone, not at their scholarship. The notes to The Curse of Kehama show how extensive was Southey's use of the works of Jones, despite his ungenerous judgements. He drew his information about Hindu

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([124] ~~128~~) Shelley, "Adonais", Poetical Works. pp. 441,443, XLII, Lines: 370-378. XLII, Lines: 379-387. LII, Lines: 460-464.

([125] ~~129~~) P.B. Shelley, Selected Poems. ed. John Holloway, (London, 1960), p. 141.

([126] ~~130~~) Carlos Baker, Shelley's Major Poetry: The Fabric of A Vision. (Princeton, 1948), p. 65.

([127] ~~131~~) (The Revd.) Charles Cuthbert Southey, The Life and Correspondence of the Late Robert Southey. 6 vols. (London, 1849-1850), III, p. 147.

mythology from him, and he quotes directly from the Hymns, as well as employing arguments from them in order to illustrate his points. He alludes in the text to the birth of Ganga:

> A stream descends on Meru mountain;
> None hath seen its secret fountain;
> It had its birth, so Sages say,
> Upon the memorable day. (~~132~~ 128)

In his note to this passage, Southey writes:

> I am indebted to Sir William Jones Hymn to Ganga for this fable:
>
> Above the stretch of mortal ken,
> On bless'd Cailasa's top where every stem
> Glow'd with a vegetable gem,
> Mahe'sa stood, the dread and joy of men;
> While Párvati, to gain a boon,
> Fix'd on his locks a beamy moon,
> And hid his frontal eye in jocund play,
> With reluctant sweet delay.,
> All nature straight was lock'd in dim eclipse,
> Till Brahmans pure, with hallow'd lips,
> And warbled prayers, restored the day;
> When Ganga from his brow, by heavenly fingers press'd, 129
> Sprang radiant, and, descending, graced the caverns of the west. (~~133~~)

Southey's poem, Thalaba, owes a great deal to Moallakat. The scenes that Southey describes usually take place in the desert, and the heroine is called Oneiza, and this indicates that he had read the poem by Amirolkais in the Moallakat, where the heroine has the same name. Southey's notes to Thalaba (1801) also shows his minute knowledge of Jones's work on Arabs and Persians. Besides references to the Essay on Poetry of Eastern Nations and the Poeseos Asiaticae Commentari, the Moallakat are often quoted to illustrate a figure of speech presumed to be Arab, or something of which

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(~~132~~ 128) Robert Southey, "The Curse of Kehama", The Poetical Works of Robert Southey. (London, 1844), Bk. X, p. 578.

(~~133~~ 129) Ibid. p. 578, n. 1.

Southey felt the need to prove the existence. Thus, for example, the poem of Tarafa is quoted to illustrate the phenomenon of the mirage, while Antara was responsible for 'the large-headed scredmer of the night'. (~~134~~ 130) This indicates that he head read the poem by Amirolkais in the Moallakat. The magic car in which Thalaba travels is also clearly modelled on the magic car in 'The Palace of Fortune'. However, in spite of all Southey's work:

> the persons and adventures of both Tahlaba and Kehama, are so supernatural, so completely out of the circle of human sympathies both in their triumph and sufferings, and they are so scrupulously divested of all the passions and circumstances of humanity, that these gorgeous and ambitious works produce on us the impression of a splendid but unsubstantial nightmare. (~~135~~ 131)

In these poems, Southey fails to create that illusion of reality which had made The Arabian Nights and Vathek so successful, an indication that Southey completely missed the spirit of the original, however accurately he read and studied Jones.

The many acknowledgements in the notes in Lalla Rookh manifest Thomas Moore's indebtedness to Jones for many oriental names and illustrations. The Composition of Lalla Rookh was preceded by laborious reading; as Moore himself wrote: 'I must also in justice to my own industry, notice the pains I took in long and labouriously reading for it. To form a store-house, as it were, for illustration purely Oriental'. (~~136~~ 132) To illustrate his reference to Crishna in Lalla Rookh, 'He was a youth about Lalla Rookh's own age, and graceful as that idol of women, Crishna'. (~~137~~ 133)

(~~134~~ 130) Southey, "Thalaba The Destroyer", Poetical Works. p. 242, n. 2.

(~~135~~ 131) Thomas B. Shaw, Outline of English Literature. (London, 1849), p. 418.

(~~136~~ 132) Thomas Moore, The Poetical Works. 10 vols. (London, 1853), VI, p. xvii.

(~~137~~ 133) Ibid. p. 16.

Moore quotes from Sir William Jones:

> 'The Indian Apollo - He and three Ramas are described as youths of perfect beauty; and the princesses of Hindustan were all passionately in love with Chrishna, who continues to this hour the darling God of the Indian women'. Sir William Jones, on the Gods of Greece, Italy, and India'. (~~138~~ 134)

In one passage from Lalla Rookh, Moore writes:

> The maid of India blest again to hold
> In her full lap the Champac's leaves of gold,
> Thinks of the time when, by the Ganges' flow,
> Her little playmates scatter'd many a bud
> Upon her long black hair, with glossy gleam
> Just dripping from the consecrated stream. (~~139~~ 135)

The footnote to these lines once again refers to Jones: 'The appearance of the blossoms of the gold-coloured Campac on the black hair of Indian women has supplied the Sanskrit poets with many elegant allusions. See 'Asiatic Researches', Vol. IV.' (~~140~~ 136) Like Byron and Shelley, Moore alludes to the Persian fable of the rose and the nightingale in the famous song, 'Bendemere's Stream' from Lalla Rookh. Besides being full of references to roses, this poem expresses sentiments which remind one of Hafiz:

> There's a bower of roses by Bendemere's stream,
> And the nightingale sings round it all the day long;
> In the time of my childhood 'twas like a sweet dream,
> To sit in the roses and hear the bird's song.
> That bower and its music I never forget,
> But oft when alone, in the bloom of the year,
> I think - is the nightingale singing there yet?
> Are the roses still bright by the calm Bendemere?

(~~138~~ 134) Moore, Poetical Works. VI, p. 16.

(~~139~~ 135) Ibid. pp. 66-67.

(~~140~~ 136) Ibid. p. 66.

No, the roses soon wither'd that hung o'er the wave,
But some blossoms were gather'd, while freshly they shone,
And a dew was distill'd from their flowers, that gave
All the fragrance of summer, when summer was gone.

Thus memory draws from delight, ere it dies,
An essence that breathes of it many a year;
Thus bright to my soul, as 'twas then to my eyes,[137]
Is that bower on the banks of calm Bendemere! (~~141~~)

Even this brief survey of Jones's influence on the English Romantics indicates that S.N. Mukherjee was mistaken when he asserted that Jones's 'impact on the Romantic poets was negligible.' ([138] ~~142~~) Jones had certainly left 'a valuable legacy' for poets of subsequent generations; and some of the leading romantics made significant use of it. ([139] ~~143~~) The popularity of his oriental translations among the romantics is a manifestation of the delight which 'these poets derived from the remote and unfamiliar' ([140] ~~144~~), and Jones, by providing this delight to these poets, greatly mitigated the 'narrow culture, the starved elegance, of the preceding age.' ([141] ~~145~~) It must be admitted that his influence consisted primarily in the introduction of oriental words and themes, rather than of poetic techniques, but this was precisely what he ardently wished to achieve. It was because of his stimulus that various writers of the following centuries imparted

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([137] ~~141~~) Moore, Poetical Works. VI, pp. 77-78.

([138] ~~142~~) Mukherjee, Sir William Jones. p. 141.

([139] ~~143~~) Albert, S.G. Canning, Literary Influence in British History. (London, 1889), p. 179.

([140] ~~144~~) Edith C. Batho, "The Poet and The Past", Proceedings of The British Acadamy. (London, 1937), XXIII, p. 33.

([141] ~~145~~) W.P. Kerr, "Thomas Warton", Proceedings of The British Acadamy. 1909-1910. (London, 1912), p. 356.

novelty and freshness to English literature by referring to oriental literary resources.

The wealth of oriental allusion drawn from his works reflects the revival of interest in the East which brilliantly manifests itself in Vathek, the bizarre masterpiece of William Beckford, which holds, among all the oriental tales of the century, a unique and deservedly high place.

VATHEK

Of vital importance in the history of English Orientalism is William Beckford's Vathek. By its fusion of Gothic romance with oriental subjects, and imagery, this remarkable work prefigured and influenced many of the imaginative products of the later Romantic writers, who used the Orient as both theme and bakcground in their works. Beckford was a fore-runner ~~the standard-bearer~~ of the Romantic revolt, and, being the first to introduce much picturesque detail, he anticipated the method of Southey, Byron and Thomas Moore. More important, however, was Vathek's indirect influence on the general course which the English Romantic movement took during the first half of the nineteenth century. Vathek was the last notable oriental tale of its period, foreshadowing the coming work of oriental scholars and of the Romantic poets, who reflect English interest in the East.

The last quarter of the eighteenth century can be considered as a transitional period, since, while many prevalent trends of the century still survived, it was side by side with new scholarly publications and ponderous travel books, all of them full of information of every kind about Eastern countries. The scholars themselves often wrote with a poetic touch and Sir William Jones, as we have already seen, was both poet, diplomat and traveller. The fact that this period can be considered as a pivotal phase in orientalism emphasizes the special status of Vathek, which provides a link between the oriental tales of the preceeding years and the Romantic period which followed its publication. It reveals how eighteenth century orientalism evolved from The Arabian Nights, which provided the cultural

background for the genre, leading on first to imitations of that work, then to the period of tentative exploration in the closing decades of the century, and finally to the poetic orientalism of the Romantics.

The Orientalism of the period before Vathek, deriving mainly from The Arabian Nights, principally inspired the writing of moral tales. In Vathek, on the other hand, the oriental tale is more autobiographical and personal than moralistic. It is fanciful and the exotic setting becomes a private world in which the author isolates himself and gives free rein to bizarre fantasies. Thus he does not wish to domesticate the exotic, but rather, to make his own domestic life take on the exotic colour of dreams. In its structure and tone however, Vathek does resemble earlier oriental tales. Another important link with earlier orientalism is established by Beckford's choosing to write in French, thus identifying himself with the strong Gallic tradition of Galland and his early followers. Beckford's French style has, however, been likened by Ahdre Parreaux to that of Voltaire. At the same time, the elaborate notes by Samuel Henley imply a much more serious interest in oriental culture than had been expected of the readers of earlier oriental tales; but even more than this, what really distinguishes Vathek is the imaginative power revealed in its account of curious and sometimes seemingly fantastical facts. This fusion is something quite new in the English oriental tale.

Beckford was not drawn to the Orient or the oriental tale for any of the practical reasons which attracted Sir William Jones; his motivations were a sense of elective affinity and a need for a private mythology. It is this introspective quality in his orientalism which most clearly links

Beckford with the Romantic movement. He moves in a direction of which most previous English writers had been aware but which they had deliberately resisted using in their oriental settings for fiction; he moves towards the amoral and forbidden. Vathek is an erotic and satanic tale, in which the author is discovering and exploring his own nature. This personal identification of Beckford's inner dream world with Eastern settings and costumes has its roots in his early life, and, in order to understand to what extent the character of Vathek is a projection of Beckford's own, we must first consider Beckford's life and character.

The life history of this outstanding English man of letters shows that much of his behaviour and many of his desires and schemes were as grandiose and ambitious as those of the original Eastern character upon whom Vathek is based, the Caliph Al-Wathik Bi Llah. Beckford's own impetuosity, intolerance and devotion to sensual pleasures are clearly reflected in Vathek. Vivid imagination, fondness for luxury, magnificence and exaggeration are tendencies that we can recognize in both the creation and the creator. Describing his own life at the time when he composed this famous tale, Beckford wrote: 'What a strange exotic animal I was in those days, abandoned to all the wildness of my imagination and setting no bounds to my caprices'. (1)

Beckford was like his prototype, voluptuous and handsome, of enormous vigour and furious mental energy. They both had fabulous wealth

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(1) William Beckford, The Journal of William Beckford in Portugal and Spain 1787-1788. ed. Alexander Boyd, (London, 1954), 'Spanish Journal', Dec. 13th 1787, p. 289.

at their disposal, but there was no limit to their vanity and curiosity. Their craving for power and worldly desires could never be satisfied, and both endured a tragic end. Vathek's and Beckford's rewards were very much the same; the reward of the unbridled Romantic whose wild oats ripened only into bitterness and burning frustration. It is not surprising that, for the last twenty years of his life, Beckford identified himself with his beloved Vathek. (2) His friends too, perhaps, to gratify his enthusiasm, used to nickname him 'The Caliph' and 'Vathek'. Cyrus Redding noticed that all the strange stories about Beckford at Fonthill had one feature in common: they equated Vathek with his creator: 'differing as they did, there was one point upon which all these stories agreed; and that was that Mr. Beckford was the type of his own Vathek, a half-human, a half demon sort of being'. (3) Beckford was also very touchy about any criticism of Vathek:

> He was never displeased at wonderments spoken or written about him(self). On the contrary, he was generally disposed to laugh heartily at them when they only attacked himself; but he did not like for his writings to be censured. Vathek was his favourite. To abuse Vathek he deemed a personal insult; his pride took the alarm and he could scarcely restrain his anger, so fierce when aroused, though evanescent. (4)

What did the oriental setting of this tale mean for the young author?

This question was first asked and dealt with in detail by Marcel May in

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(2) Alexander Boyd, England's Wealthiest Son: A Study of William Beckford. (London, 1962), p. 236.

(3) Cyrus Redding, Life at Fonthill. Manuscript, ii, p. 34. Quoted in: Boyd, England's Wealthiest Son. p. 92.

(4) Ibid. i, p. 121.

1928, (5) he has shown to what extent the character of Vathek was a projection of Beckford's own. When the commander of the Faithful singed the beards of his worthy subjects, shocked the holy men with his irreverence or caused sermon-preaching nuisances to be pinched to death, he was, the writer thought, avenging the thousand petty vexations which the vulgarity of Frangistan caused the passionate autocrat of Fonthill. (6)

Born in 1760 at Fonthill in Wiltshire, the son of a former Lord Mayor of London, Beckford inherited a vast fortune at the age of nine. By virtue and his ownership of slaves,
of his wealth he had an almost Caliph-like status, and this led him to associate himself in his imagination, not with the eunuchs and beggars, but with the despotic rulers of the Arabian stories. He was educated privately and he studied painting under Alexander Cozens, who had been dubbed by Guy Chapman 'the key to Beckford's youth'. Rumour made Cozens an illegitimate son of ~~the~~ Peter the Great, and, emerging mysteriously from Russia, he was certainly an exotic figure, living on the frontiers of eighteenth century taste. Later known as 'Sir Dingy Digit', he invented a special technique of covering paper with smudges and blots and then transferring these into images composing a vague picturesque landscape, a kind of Romantic Rorschach. Cozens showed the young Beckford oriental drawings and may indeed have given him his first copy of The Arabian Nights. Beckford, always irresistibly drawn to all that was exotic, irregular and fantastic, found great pleasure in perusing The Arabian Nights and other tales. His imagination was fired by their

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(5) Marcel May, La jeunesse de William Beckford et la génèse de son Vathek. (Paris, 1928).

(6) Ibid. p. 188.

strangeness and colour and he soon became an eager devotee of oriental studies. However, the boy's staid guardian, Lord Chatham, and his tutor, Lettice, found this youthful pursuit of oriental things alarming, and had it stopped. Lettice proudly reported to Chatham that:

> it will give your Lordship pleasure to be informed that, about a month ago, that splendid heap of oriental drawings, etc., which filled a large table at Burton, has been sacrificed at the shrine of good taste. Mr. Beckford had firmness enough to burn them with his own hand. (7)

The ceremony this hints at is even more significant than Cozen's orientalizing influence. Obviously the burning was a gesture of appeasement, showing a devotion so great that a dramatic false denial was necessary. Here we see the future author of Vathek, not only already absorbed in oriental fantasies, but also skilled in the hypocrisy which was to be a life-long quality. Here too, we see how an association was fixed by early experience: orientalism was forbidden, and hence was to be associated with a sense of personal damnation, leading to an attitude of bold defiance. So great an impression did this incident leave on Beckford's mind that the episode is re-enacted in his early unpublished novel L'Esplendente. Here he describes how his hero's first rift with his beloved Mahometan father comes when the latter discovers him impiously drawing the human form, and orders him to:

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(7) Lewis Melville, The Life and Letters of William Beckford of Fonthill. (London, 1910), p. 18.

abandon for ever an art which some demon must have suggested to you in this retirement. So saying, he furiously snatched up the leaves (of the book) which were scattered about, and tearing them asunder committed them to the winds and torrent. The youth sobbed, not daring to reply or to make any attempt to save the children of his fancy. But the loss affected him more than can be imagined; he turned angrily from his father and, hiding his face with his hands, gave way to violent indignation. What can my father mean, which crime have I committed? (8)

The opposition from his tutor and guardian in no way discouraged Beckford's interest in the orient, and he became an eager devotee of oriental studies. He avidly read many tales of the orient, but The Arabian Nights always held a unique position for him. While they inspired him with the idea of Vathek, traces of their powerful influence can also be found in his other oriental compositions, such as The Vision, The Episodes of Vartek and various unpublished oriental prose work.

As he passed from childhood into maturity, Beckford's life became a protest against the rigid social conventions of the Augustan Age that seemed to him to make life so dull and to turn men and women into machines. He had not only the courage but also the means to carry into practice things of which other men were merely dreaming. Unlike the pure Romantic type and the mystic, his character presented a dichotomy, for, while knowing the danger of curious pleasures, he yet revelled in them. He himself was quite aware of the two sides of his nature: 'Reason and fancy' he wrote in 1778; 'are my Sun and Moon.' The first dispels vapours and clears up the face of things; the other throws over all Nature a dim Haze, and may be styled the Dream of Delusions'. (9)

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(8) Beckford, L'Esplendente. p. 31.
Quoted in: Boyd, England's Wealthiest Son. p. 42.

(9) Melville, The Life ..... Dec. 4th, 1778, p. 65.

As a result of an early and intensive education in which no efforts or money were spared to direct and stimulate the boy's talents, all his life Beckford was preoccupied with various branches of the fine arts, music, painting, architecture and literature. Besides a good knowledge of the classics, philosophy and science, he had a rare command of languages. By the time he was seventeen, his voracious and undiscriminating literary appetite gave him a knowledge of literature which was both extensive and peculiar, and a romantic nature was responsible for his thoughts and deeds in this adolescent stage. His education had fostered and warmed a naturally curious and romantic disposition, his loneliness made him self-centred, and, being discontented with the real world, he never failed to build his own according to his peculiar taste and fantastic ideas.

Through reading the oriental tales; Beckford was introduced to oriental satanism, and gradually he became more and more fascinated by this subject. Montague Summers, not, however, a very reliable source, has claimed that the fact that 'Black masses were celebrated at Fonthill in December 1781 and perhaps other occasions,' seems certain. (10) From 1781 onward, it seems that the ambitious youth imagined that he could, by the powers of magic, secure an empire, if not over the material world, certainly over those who peopled it.

Beckford also indulged his sensuality in a series of exotic love affairs, but of them all, his most ardent attachment was for his cousin's wife, Louisa. In her he found a sympathetic mistress and loyal fellow satanist who responded most favourably to his call. Even after his

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(10) Montague Summers, Witchcraft and Black Magic. (London, 1945), p. 222.

marriage to Lady Margaret Gordon in 1783, Louisa wanted Beckford to continue his relations with her and threatened to turn virtuous if he did not. 'If you stretch not forth your hand to sustain me in the broad road we have so long trodden together, I verily believe I shall become holy, repent my sins, and seek for consolation in the narrow path that leads to everlasting life'. She concluded this significant message with a typical exhortation, 'Come then my lovely Daemon, if you still wish me to follow you, and your presence blow up my soul the dying embers of Paganism'. (11) However, she realized that neither she, nor anyone else, could hold a higher place in Beckford's affection than the beautiful little boy, William Courtenay, with whom he fell desperately in love. The scandal which this relationship caused, forced him to leave England for Switzerland, and it was here that Lady Margaret died.

That Beckford continued to lead an irresponsible, immoral life, indulging himself in strange and forbidden pleasures does not obscure the fact that he suffered from a sense of guilt, as he very well knew that he was going in the wrong direction. He must have felt the weight of public censure when he wrote to Louisa: 'I fall lower and lower in the World's opinion. - ruin is joined with my own. There is but one remedy for that - Good God how violent'. Were you here I should not entirely despair; - but your absence leaves me in darkness of the Shadow of Death - Ah Louisa - your imagination as it is, can never paint the horrors with which I am surrounded. (12)

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(11) Guy Chapman, Beckford. (London, 1937), Nov. 10th 1783, p. 166.

(12) Ibid, March 29th, 1783, pp. 151-152.

He travelled extensively from 1785 to 1798, and on one of his longer visits to England in 1790, he began to rebuild Fonthill as a Gothic abbey. However, the spire was so hurriedly constructed that it collapsed in a gale. Beckford shut himself up at Fonthill for the next twenty years while rumours circulated about his dark practices. Then he started to have financial worries and was forced to sell off some of his estates, and, by 1821, his income was so far reduced that he had to sell Fonthill itself. He retired to Bath, where he built a Lansdown Tower, a structure as classical in design as Fonthill was Gothic. As has been noted above, for the last twenty years of his life Beckford identified himself with his beloved Vathek, and when he died on 2nd May, 1844, the epitaph chosen for his tombstone was an adptation of some words from the closing scene of the book: 'Enjoying humbly the most precious gift of Heaven - Hope.' (13)

As has been briefly mentioned, Beckford wrote oriental tales before the culmination of his talents in Vathek. In the winter of 1777, he wrote an uncompleted story without a title, dedicated to Alexander Cozens. He called it 'The Long Story' which was published in 1930 as The Vision. Though it is unfinished and perhaps partly lost, we know enough of The Vision to see it as a preliminary study for Vathek.

This is an account of the overflowing of the youthful, Romantic, vigorous spirit of Beckford as he gave himself up to rhapsodies and visions under the intoxicating effect of the magnificent Alpine scenes of Switzerland. The significance of The Vision, a purely romantic oriental tale, in understanding Beckford's literary career is considerable. The narrator, wandering

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(13) Boyd, England's Wealthiest Son. p. 240.

by himself up untrodden mountain paths on a moonlit night, is met by two majestic figures, a Brahmin 'who later turns into an angel', Moisasour, and a maiden draped in muslins who is called Nourinihar. Her eyes are sometimes described as blue, sometimes green and sometimes black. Beckford sometimes describes her as 'the fair Indian' but at other times she seems to be Persian and 'the Persian language sounded most sweetly from her lips'. Her character is totally different from that of the Caliph Vathek's bride, for she is all goodness and wisdom. The manuscript ends with her giving the narrator, who has just passed through the most impossible ordeals, a meal composed of the milk of cocoas and the juice of a thousand fruits and settling down to read to him from two large volumes covered with mystic writings.

The scene of Vathek set in the hall of Eblis is to some extent anticipated in The Vision. The author, after passing the trials that proved him worthy of the company and education of the good Brahmin, arrives in company with two angels like creatures (Malick and Terminga) at the throne of Moisasour:

> ... We arraived at a vast arch closed by a portal of ebony, whose valves flying open of a sudden with a sound that rung amongst the alters, displayed an immensely spacious concave unsupported by any visible cause and glowing with a refulgence that proceeded from an orb of the most brilliant hue, suspended from the centre by chains that, almost imperceptible, wore the appearance of sunbeams. Under the orb I beheld a flight of many hundred steps covered with a rich carpet of purple which imitated the mossy herbage of the sub-terraneous valleys. On every step sat a lucid form increasing in glory and stature, the nearer they approached Moisasour who was seated on the summit of the steps while Nouronihar. reclined at his feet. (14)

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(14) William Beckford, The Vision and Liber Veritatis. ed. G. Chapman, (London, 1930), pp. 38-39.

The resemblence between this scene and the description of the Hall of Eblis is evident. The difference lies in the feeling of luminous wisdom and natural goodness that prevades the whole atmosphere of The Vision, in marked contrast to the sense of evil that hangs over Vathek.

For the literary sources of Vathek we must turn to d'Herbelot's Bibliothèque Orientale (15) Here we find recounted Vathek's great promise as a ruler, his curiosity, his religious sceptisicm, his early death, and the succession of his rebellious brother, Motavakel. However, this was no more than a framework to place Vathek in a living, exotic, oriental environment, and to endow the tale with incidents oriental in their peculiarity. Beckford also drew on his beloved Arabian Nights. The frequent descriptions of subterranean vaults which are entered through ebony doors and the even more frequent merchant-jinns selling supernatural wares, the strange illnesses, like Vathek's unquenchable thirst, which is induced by enchantment, show the influence of the magic tales of Shahrezad. Beckford may have drawn the grotesque incident of the rolling Giaour from the tale of the 791st night about a young man whose body swells so disproportionately that he loses his balance and rolls down a hill like a ball. The ~~use of~~ similarity between Beckford's work and The Arabian Nights ~~reflects, not plagiarism, but an insight onto the~~ is evidence, however, not that Beckford was a plagiarist, but that he had thoroughly absorbed the oriental method of story-telling, ~~a method fully~~ which is so abundantly demonstrated ~~there.~~ in the Arabian originals. Beckford adapted his oriental sources to his original story, and as a result of his extensive knowledge and careful imaginative employment of oriental materials, he maintained an Arabic verisimilitude.

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(15) Barthelemy d'Herbelot de Molainville, Bibliothèque Orientale, Ou Dictionnaire Universel . . . . (Paris, 1697).

In his note on The Giaour Byron paid tribute to the accuracy of Beckford's orientalism in Vathek:

> ... for correctness of costume, beauty of description, and power of imagination, it far surpasses all European limitations, and bears such marks of originality that those who have visited the East will find some difficulty in believing it to be more than a translation. (16)

Byron's note emphasizes the most striking aspect of Vathek: the careless ease with which Beckford infused oriental life into his story. He caught in Vathek the lavish magnificence of the oriental court with its slaves, guards, eunuchs, harems and musicians, as well as the exotic world of oriental supernaturalism with its ghouls, genii and afrits. The character of Vathek is easily identified as that of a descendant of the Harun-al-Rashid of The Arabian Nights: grandfather and grandson have the same commanding presence, the same tendency to allow passion to overrule judgement. Much of Beckford's success in creating a convincing tale of the genre of The Arabian Nights derives from the use he made of lesser-known aspects of oriental life. Casually inserted into the body of the narrative are references to the hill of Pied Horses, spoons of Cocknos, baths of rose water, butterflies of Cachemire and a score of other, equally obscure, references. In an evocative description of a retreat on a high mountain near Samarah, Beckford displayed (subtly) ~~the~~ his depth of ~~his knowledge of~~ feeling for Arabian nature mythology:

'Here the nightingale sang the birth of the rose, her well-beloved, and, at the same time, lamented its short-lived beauty ...' (17) The allusion

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(16) Byron, Works ... . p. 895.

(17) William Beckford, Vathek. ed. Roger Lonsdale, (London, 1970), pp. 13-14

to a love relationship between the nightingale and the rose is not just a soft, poetic touch invented by Beckford. It reflects an old poem contained in The Arabian Nights, "The Song of The Rose":

> My visit is shorter than a ghost's,
> Between Winter, it is, and Summer.
> Hasten to play with me, play with me;
> Time is a sword.
> I balm my breath,
> I am the colour of love,
> I tingle in the hand of the girl who takes me.
> I am your guest,
> Hope not to keep me long,
> The nightingale loves me.
>
> I am the glory,
> But the glory is hardest pressed of all the flowers.
> I am the ever wounded,
> Thorns spring out on my youth,
> Steel arrows splashing my silks with my blood,
> Staining my silks vermilion.
>
> Yet I remain the elegant of passing things,
> The pride of morning.
> I wear my beauty in a crystal shift of dew.
>
> Men hurry me from my green to another crystal,
> My body turns to water, my heart is burned,
> My tears are collected
> And my flesh is torn.
> I feel the passion of fire,
> My soul is fumed off,
> My spirit goes in vapour;
> My sweet sweat is a record of my pain.
> The passionate
> Breathe the musk of my case garments with delight;
> My body goes from you, but my soul remains;
> The wise do not regret my little time in the garden,
> But lovers would have me,
> Silly pretty lovers,
> Have me there for ever. (18)

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(18) The Book of The Thousand Nights and One Night.
ed. P. Mathers, (London, 1964), IV, pp. 322-323.

When the similarities between Vathek and The Arabian Nights are fully appreciated, the manner in which Beckford's tale differed from the collection of Arabian tales must also be considered. It is possible that his use of other sources may account for some of the differences between Vathek and The Arabian Nights. Cyrus Redding considered that the pseudo-oriental tale by J.P. Bignon, The History of Abdalla, Son of Hanif, was a major source for Vathek because it contained such terminology as peris, dives and ginns, and because it was to be found in Beckford's library. (19)

The History of Abdalla was certainly the source for Beckford's introduction of a globe of fire as Eblis's throne. The tale may have attracted Beckford by virtue of its crude descriptions and violent actions, but, apart from its globe of fire, it is unlikely to have been an important source of Beckford's Vathek.

Another serious oriental tale provided Beckford with the image of the flaming hearts. One of Gueullettes's Mogul Tales describes the travels of Aboul-Assem to Persepolis where, in a hill near the ruins of Soloman's temple, he finds a subterranean passage. Proceeding through the tunnel, he enters a large vault where he discovers three men standing in attitudes of sorrow. Upon inquiring into the reasons for their sadness, he receives the reply:

> Alas! ... we are continually tortured for the evil we have done, see what a wretched state we are in; then they unbuttoned their waist-coats, and through their skin, which appeared like crystal, I saw their heart compassed with fire, by which, though they were burnt without ceasing, yet they were never consumed ... (20)

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(19) Cyrus Redding, Fifty Years' Recollections. 3 vols. (London, 1858), III, p. 121.

(20) Gueullette, 'Mogul Tales', Tales of the East. 3 vols. ed. Henry Weber, (London, 1812), III, p. 58.

Oriental writings, however, were not Beckford's only source of inspiration, and, amongst European authors closer to Beckford's own culture to whom he was to a certain extent indebted, Milton was probably the most influential. The influence of Milton carried Beckford away from oriental sources in the writing of Vathek, since the character of Eblis appears to have been drawn from the Satan of Paradise Lost, his physical features owing a good deal to one of the forms in which Milton's Satan appears. Beckford's description of the Palace of Subterranean Fire may also be derived from Milton's description of the Palace of Pandemonium raised by Satan's legions in Hell. The correspondence between Milton's Pandemonium and Beckford's Palace of Subterranean Fire are not direct, but there are some direct indications of Beckford's use of Milton's conceptions: the arched roof, the embossed walls, the great expanse of 'pavement', and the music which rose beneath. His Eblis is more akin to Milton's Satan than to the character of The Arabian Nights. There is in Beckford's Eblis a consciousness of being evil tinged with regret at lost glory, a sense of sin wholly foreign to The Arabian Nights, whose Eblis displays no dissatisfaction with his present position. Similarly, Beckford's account of Soliman places no emphasis on his wisdom and magnificence, the two qualities which caught the imagination of the author of The Arabian Nights. So obsessed was Beckford with Soliman's sins that he created new ones to accord with his punishment. He suggests, for example, that Soliman became a convert to Zoroaster, a suggestion which finds no support in Hebrew, Mohammedan or Christian mythology. In the characterization of both Eblis and Soliman, Beckford emphasized the depravity to which ambition is subject. The theme may have arisen unconsciously as a result of the strong element of Methodism in his early education, but the moral is definitely directed at his own society. By adapting the tales to suit the ethics of his own society, he established a moral framework with which his readers might sympathise much more readily,

Beckford was well acquainted with Sir William Jones's works, and he seems to have been influenced more by "A Persian Song of Hafiz" and the Moallakat than by any other work of Jones. These influences can certainly be traced in Vathek, which is our particular concern in this chapter.

Beckford sometimes used the 'magic-sounding proper names' of Sir William Jones, for example. Caliph Vathek says to his minister: 'I am disgusted with the mountain of the four fountains, and am resolved to go and drink of the stream of Rocnabad. I long to refresh myself, in the delightful vallies which it waters'. (21) In a note about 'Rocnabad' Beckford actually mentioned Jones's work:

> The stream thus denominated, flows near the city of Schiraz. Its waters are uncommonly pure and limpid, and its banks swarded with the finest verdure.. Its praises are celebrated by Hafez, in an animated song, which Sir William Jones has admirably translated:
>
> Boy, let yon liquid ruby flow,
> And bid thy pensive heart be glad,
> Whate'er the frowning zealots say:
> Tell them, their Eden cannot shew
> A stream so clear as Rocnabad,
> A bower so sweet as Mosella. (22)

In Nournihar's parody of Persian verses, we again come across sentiments which are unmistakably eastern: 'Oh, gentle white dove! as thou soar'st through the air, vouchsafe one kind glance on the mate of they love: melodious Philomel, I am thy rose; warble some couplet to ravish my heart!' (23) Beckford comments on 'melodious philomel' in the note:

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(21) Beckford, Vathek. p. 37.

(22) Ibid. p. 132.

(23) Ibid. p. 58.

> The passion of the nightingale for the rose is celebrated over all the East. Thus Mesfhii, (sic) as translated by Sir W. Jones:
>
> 'Come, charming maid, and hear thy poet sing,
> Thyself the rose, and he the bird of Spring:
> Love birds him sing, and love will be obey'd,
> Be gay: too soon the flowers of Spring will fade' (24)

Philomel is the Greek name for the nightingale; the Persians call it bulbul. The important point which should be noted is that the Greeks consider 'philomel' as a female bird; whereas in Persian literature the nightingale is a male. The attachment of the nightingale to the rose which is considered by the Persians to be the beloved of the former, is a peculiarly eastern sentiment; and Beckford uses the Greek word in the eastern sense.

Beckford's borrowings from the Moallakat are numerous, but they are not always acknowledged. Thus when Caliph Vathek comes down from the tower:

> For some time a general stillness prevailed, which nothing happened to disturb,but the shrill screams of some eunuchs in the rear. These vigilant guards, having remarked certain cages of the ladies swaggering somewhat awry, and discovered that a few adventurous gallants had contrived to get in, soon dislodged the enraptured culprits and consigned them, with good condemnations, to the surgeons of the seraail. (25)

This passage obviously refers to the poem of Amriolkais in the Moallakat, but Beckford does not acknowledge the reference. In the note about 'certain cages of the ladies', he does, however, quote extensively from the Moallakat, in which these cages are described:

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(24) Beckford, Vathek. p. 143.

(25) Ibid. p. 43.

There are many passages of the Moallakat in which these cages are fully described. Thus, in the poem of Lebeid: 'How were thy tender affections raised, when the damsels of the tribe departed; when they hid themselves in carriages of cotton, like antelopes in their lair, and the tents as they were struck gave a piercing sound'.

'They were concealed in vehicles, whose sides were well covered with awnings and carpets, with fine-spun curtains and pictured veils.' Again Zohair: 'They are mounted in carriages covered with costly awnings, and with rose-coloured veils, the lining of which have the hue of crimson andemwood. (26)

An important historical influence was the original figure of the Caliph Al-Wathik Bi Llah. Abujafar Harun Al-Wathik Bi-Llah was born of a Greek slave-girl called Karattis. On the death of his father Al Mutasim, Al Wathik was proclaimed Caliph in January 842 A.D. This ninth Abbasid Caliph was a fair complexioned, handsome young man. But his left eye, which had a spot in it, had a terrible look and was remarkably piercing. On the whole the Caliph's charcter was not such as to make him beloved of his subjects. The only good aspects of his fierce, undisciplined character were his liberality to the poor in Mecca and Al Medina, and his great interest in science and the arts. Of the latter, he particularly favoured poetry and singing and spared no efforts to promote them. He himself was well versed in polite literature and was a graceful poet who left behind many love-poems expressing his passionate attachment to male and female slaves. At the same time, however, the Caliph was known to be covetous, intolerant and devoted to sensual pleasures. To augment his own resources he arbiterarily extorted huge sums of money from the ministers and high officials of his court. In the matter of religion, he was an ardent Mutazili.

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(26) Beckford, Vathek. p. 134.

The Mutazilite creed was founded on two main dogmas: that The Koran was not eternal but created, and that man has perfect freedom; he is the author of his actions both good and evil, and deserves reward or punishment accordingly. The severest penalties, even death, awaited those who dared to differ. (27) As a member of his sect, the Caliph relentlessly persecuted the orthodox theologians.

As for sensual pleasures, the young Monarch was much addicted to drink and the pleasures of the table. His extravagance and gluttony were almost proverbial. His homosexuality and indulgence in sexual relations with women were other outstanding features in his character. Meanwhile, being conscious of his failure as a spiritual leader, and the prophet's vicegerent, he suffered, not surprisingly, from a sense of guilt. His speech and conduct in the case of Ahmad Ibn Nasr (who took a leading part in the plot to dethrone him) illustrate how the Caliph hoped for the forgiveness of God through his merits in slaying heathen charged with polytheism. 'Leave me alone", said the Caliph, 'while thus in his blood I expiate my sins'. (28)

As a ruler, Al Wathik was weak and arbitrary in his administration. His short reign of six years was remarkable for political disturbances and religious revolts throughout the Muslim Empire. Towards the end of his life, when the Caliph was seized with terrible thirst, the result of dissipated living, he invited all fortune-tellers and astrologers to examine the stars with a view to prescribing the cause and cure for his illness.

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(27) T.P. Hughes, Dictionary of Islam. (Lahore,1885), p. 425 see also: H.A.R. Gibb & J.H. Kramers, Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam. (Leiden,1975), pp. 421-427.

(28) (Sir) William Muir, The Caliphate: its Rise, Decline and Fall. (London,1898), p. 524.

The remedy prescribed was exposure in an oven, which overheated and caused his death.

In general outline, the life and character of Caliph Vathek, as depicted by Beckford, follow faithfully the original facts concerning the life and times of the historical figure. Yet, in a work of fiction, occasional departures from the historical facts in order to enhance dramatic effect, or for other artistic reasons, are quite inevitable. Magic, astrology and fire worship, luxury and magnificence, homosexuality and indulgence in sensual pleasures, scientific research and intolerable heterodoxy, religious dissensions and political unrest were all characteristic features of the reign of Caliph Al-Wathik. What is striking about Beckford's treatment of his material is the extent to which he adapted everything regarding the Caliph's character and surroundings so as to make of the whole a reflection of his own conception of oriental life and outlook.

Having examined the background of the tale and the origins of the main protogonist, let us know discuss how the story came to be written. In December 1781 Beckford assembled an intimate Christmas party at Fonthill. Louisa was there, and so were her sister Harriet and her friend Sophia. Also present were Alexander Cozens and William Courtney, two young Hamilton cousins, Alexander and Archibald, with their tutor, Samuel Henley, who was later to translate and annotate Vathek, and the two daughters of Lord Dunmore, the last Governor of Virginia. The occasion has now become somewhat shrouded in mystery, and Chapman believes that Beckford and Louisa were playing about with Black Magic, perhaps with the Black Mass. In three letters she wrote him shortly after the December festivities, there

are hints of such things:

> I am miserable now I have no little victim in training to sacrifice on your alter. I wish to God my William was old enough for it. He grows every day more and more beautiful and will in time answer your purpose to perfection. (29)
>
> x x x x x
>
> Now I really do owe a sacrifice to the Furies, and am ripe for any mischievous undertaking which you, my lovely prompter, may choose to suggest. Do you point out the victims. It shall be my care to lure them into your snares, and you shall find them at your return panting on your altars. (30)
>
> x x x x x
>
> We will join in heaping miseries on this devoted world, and it shall not be said that we are sunk into the dark abyss without having experienced to the utmost the diabolical pleasure of revenge. I honour your dauntless assurances, truly worthy, a descendant of the great Lucifer. Your apartment adorned with the youthful victims you have scarificed on his altars may perhaps ere long be sanctified by his presence, where, transformed in the mystick shape of a goat, he will receive in person our adorations. (31)

Beckford later called the Christmas party 'Our orientalism last December at Fonthill', in his letter to Louisa Beckford 11th March, 1782 and clearly Orientalism was the over-riding mood which that special occasion left in his mind. Having bade farewell to the last of his guests, and in an enthusiasm generated by the success of his party, the romantic decor, and Henley's evident respect for his oriental scholarship, Beckford began to write an oriental tale. Probably to underline his abilities as a scholar, he wrote in French, and after a few days of concentrated effort, he had succeeded in finishing a rough draft. During the two years that followed,

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(29) Chapman, Beckford. Feb. 6th, 1782, p. 102.

(30) Ibid. March 20th, 1782, p. 102.

(31) Ibid. April 21st, 1782, p. 102.

Beckford re-wrote and improved the story, sending completed sections to Henley for translation into English. At first the agreement between them seems to have been for transcription only, since it was Beckford's habit, once he had written a first draft of a work to give it to someone else to revise, transcribe, or translate. It was not until later that Beckford wrote from Geneva (November, 1783): 'You proposed likewise to translate Vathec, which I left in your hands. Could I show you a greater mark of confidence? You have the only copy which exists of the only production of mine.' (32) Henley went ahead with the translation and produced one which was evidently faithful in tone and style to the original. In completing his translation, Henley gradually adopted the role of literary collaborator, thus increasing his feeling of having a share in Vathek. The idea of an annotated edition seems to have been Henley"s, and his idea was a good one. His readers would be pleased with a thrilling story and also with the scholarly assurance that the background and costume were authentic. Beckford himself realized that the notes gave an air of authenticity to the orientalism of the tale, for he used some of them in an edition which appeared in London in 1809.

The translation of Vathek was finished, the notes were completed, and everything was ready for publication by June 1785, but Beckford wanted the English and French versions to appear simultaneously, if possible, with the appended Episodes of Vathek. However, in August 1786, Beckford was still writing that he could not get on with the Episodes. Indeed,

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(32) Chapman, Beckford. Nov. 18th, 1783, p. 168.

the Episodes, for which Vathek was so long delayed, were never published by Beckford and did not appear until Lewis Melville published them, with the translations by Sir Frank Marzials, in 1912. So, in 1786, without Beckford's knowledge and against his known wishes, Henley published the English translation of Vathek which he had made. It appeared under the title: An Arabian Tale from an Unpublished Manuscript with Notes Critical and Explanatory, and it was published anonymously. Naturally, when he heard of Henley's betrayal of his trust, Beckford was furious. Hoping to salvage at least part of the credit for the authorship of Vathek, Beckford obtained the original French manuscript, or a copy of it, and placed it in the hands of David Levade, an experienced translator, probably telling him to correct the most glaring faults and to rush it into print. This edition was published in Lausanne at the end of November, 1786. Such a hurriedly produced edition contained many errors, but Beckford became aware of them and had a corrected edition published in Paris in the summer of 1787.

The appearance of the English edition before any French editions, and the fact that the English edition resembles neither edition in French, has given rise to controversies about the adequacy of the Henley text as a medium for criticism of Beckford's tale. However, the question can be resolved by Beckford himself; that Henley's translation had his full enthusiastic approval is witnessed in his letter to Henley:

> You make me proud of Vathec (sic). The blaze just at present is so overpowering that I can see no faults, but you can depend on my hunting diligently after them. Pray send the continuation, I know not how it happens, but the original when first born scarce gave me so much rapture as your translation. (33)

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(33) Alfred Morrison, (ed.). The Collection of Autograph Letters and Historical Documents. second series, privately published, 2 vols. (London, 1893-1894), I, p. 193.

His satisfaction with the English translation is further indicated by his reissuing the 1786 edition in 1809 without change and again in 1816 with corrections of only the most obvious errors.

Before embarking on a critical examination of the tale itself, it may be helpful to give a resume of the plot. The novel begins by establishing the Caliph Vathek as a ruler of splendid powers, the beginning of whose rule was greeted with great happiness by his admiring and hopeful subjects. Vathek is, on the one hand, a frank sensualist who is willing to go to great length to indulge his desires, and on the other, a ruler of great learning, whose breadth of knowledge extends even to the science of the occult. His curiosity is extravagantly described as the greatest in the world, although he is intolerant of any opinions conflicting with his own. Vathek's persecution of zealous churchmen for those aspects of their belief which were based on faith rather than reason attracts the attention of Mahomet, who sees the inevitable results of Vathek's passions. Mahomet intervenes either to assist Vathek to find the road to salvation, or to hasten his damnation and rid the world of his influence. Hence Mahomet assists the speedy construction of an enormous tower ordered by Vathek for the study of astrology. Standing at the top of the completed tower, he looks up and sees that the stars appear no closer, in spite of the height of the tower. He boasts that he will soon employ those distant stars to see into the future. An Indian merchant sells Vathek magic sabres but refuses to answer his questions concerning their origin. Vathek is annoyed at the Indian's response, and throws him into prison. The next morning he finds his prison open and his guards dead; he falls into a mad rage which only the strong influence of his mother, Carathis, can halt. At his mother's

suggestion, he recognizes that the merchant was a representative of occult powers, the augury of whose visit he had read in the stars.

The influence of Carathis now plays a prominent role in the story. When Vathek is lost in self-recrimination because he did not discern that the merchant was extraordinary, Carathis suggests that the inscription on the sabres may shed some light on their origin. When Vathek's knowledge of languages prove insufficient for the task of deciphering the inscription he beats his head and bites his nails in disappointment, but Carathis tells him to issue a proclamation promising a reward to the man who can read the inscription. Vathek's subjection to his own passions now leads him into a succession of absurdities. He punishes the only man able to read the inscription on the sabres because he does not like what the writing says. The Indian merchant appears to make miraculous ministrations, but instead of showing respect for the Giaour, Vathek again yields to his temper at the disrespect shown him by the Giaour and he kicks him. There follows one of the most grotesque scenes in the English novel, for, upon being kicked, the fat Giaour crouches into a ball and begins to roll along the floor of the palace. The rolling Indian proves an irresistible attraction and soon the reader is presented with the tableau of the rolling Giaour followed by an enormous crowd, with Vathek in front, trying to kick the Indian. The tableau ends with the disappearance of the Indian into a chasm.

Determined to see the Giaour again, Vathek camps out by the chasm. After several days, the Indian reappears and offers Vathek the great treasures and powers of the Palace of Subterranean Fire if Vathek will

forsake Mahomet's teachings and serve the terrestrial powers. Vathek is greatly impressed by the Giaour's promises, and readily renounces Mahomet. Following the wishes of the Giaour, Vathek arranges to sacrifice fifty sons of his highest ranking subjects, but his actions so enrage the people that they threaten to kill him. However, Carathis effects his rescue, and they take refuge in Vathek's tower. Drawing on her own knowledge of the occult, Carathis arranges a successful sacrifice to the infernal powers, obtaining specific instructions for Vathek to follow which will lead him to the subterranean kingdom. He is to travel in state to Istakar, but is not to enter any dwelling en route.

As a result of their alliance with the subterranean powers, Vathek and Carathis conduct a campaign of sin and blasphemy against the celestial powers, culminating in the profanation by Vathek of a sacred broom brought from Mecca by devout pilgrims. Vathek begins his journey to Istakar, but, on their way, he and his entourage experience dangers and discomforts from tempests, wild beasts and treacherous roads. They become lost and are forced to subsist on the most meagre of diets. Finally, they are rescued by the Emir Fakreddin, whose offer of accommodation Vathek is happy to accept, in spite of his instructions not to enter any dwelling. In the Palace of Fakreddin, Vathek develops a passion for his host's lively daughter, Nouronihar, who is nevertheless content with her betrothal to her cousin Gulchenrouz, a child-like boy who prefers quite pursuits and the study of nature to the masculine war-games expected of the relatives of a ruler.

Nouronihar resists the attraction of Vathek's splendid person until the infernal powers extend their temptation, to which she quickly succumbs. Fakreddin attempts to separate Nouronihar from Vathek, but without success, and Vathek and Nouronihar lose themselves in the pleasures of love. Vathek's former favourite wife, the Sultana Dilara, jealous of Nouronihar and dissatisfied with the progress Vathek is making towards Istakar, communicates with Carathis the news of Vathek's purposeless time-wasting with Nouronihar. Carathis resolves to go to him, and with two female negro servants and a large, ugly camel, she sets off immediately, and, in a vividly described passage, she requests and obtains information concerning her son's location from a group of ghouls. Carathis finds Vathek, upbraids him for his slowness, and then departs in search of Gulchenrouz, whom she wishes to sacrifice to the Giaour. With a further demonstration of her knowledge of magic, Carathis receives the directions she needs in order to find Gulchenrouz from the fishes of a neighbouring stream. Her plan is foiled, however, by the intervention of a good genius who protects Gulchenrouz, taking him to a Bullah-like paradise, where are found the fifty boys, Vathek's sacrifice, whom the genius had rescued from the jaws of the Giaour. This accounts for the interruption to the speedy trip to the Hall of Eblis, promised to Vathek by the Giaour. Carathis receives auguries of a revolution in the capital and returns immediately to crush it. Vathek, spurred by his mother's urging, departs for Istakar. The journey offers Vathek further opportunity to mistreat his subjects and insult local leaders. However, an attempt is now made to halt Vathek's progress to damnation by a good genius disguised as a shepherd.

At this point the humour departs from the novel and Vathek is told directly for the first time that his subservience to the wishes of Eblis is leading him to severe punishment. He is told that he has the time that it will take for a cloud to pass over the sun to decide whether to choose salvation or to continue his path to Eblis and eternal damnation. Vathek achieves romantic stature with his courageous reply:

> Whoever thou art, withhold thy useless admonitions: thou wouldst either delude me, or art thyself deceived. If what I have done be so criminal, as thou pretendest, there remains not for me a moment of grace. I have traversed a sea of blood, to acquire a power, which will make thy equals tremble: deem not that I shall retire, when in view of the port; or, that I will relinquish her, who is dearer to me than either my life, or thy mercy. Let the sun appear! Let him illume my career! it matters not where it may end. (34)

Vathek and Nouronihar continue their journey, arriving by nightfall at the ruined palace of Soliman at Istakar. A mountain opens, revealing a dark stairway, down which, arm in arm, Vathek and Nouronihar step. The Giaour opens the door for them, and they enter the lofty Hall of Eblis, where vast accucumulations of riches and great luxury are accessible. They are ushered into the commanding presence of Eblis, who places all luxury at their disposal. As they explore the attractions of the Hall of Eblis, Vathek and Nouronihar are disturbed by the expressions of anguish and torment on the faces of the other inhabitants and by their peculiar gesture of holding their right hands over their hearts. Their curiosity is satisfied by Soliman Ben Daoud who bares to them his transparent chest in which can be seen his heart enclosed in flames. Vathek cries to Mahomet for mercy, but is told by the Giaour that he is past mercy, that soon his heart will be

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(34) Beckford, Vathek. p. 105.

similarly ignited. Vathek and Nouronihar, no longer interested in the treasures of Eblis, wander aimlessly until they meet four men and a woman also awaiting punishment, and each agrees to recount the events of his life which led to the Hall of Eblis. To ensure that Carathis does not escape punishment, Vathek dispatches an afrite to fetch her. She arrives very excitedly, meets Eblis and explores his palace:

> She even attempted to dethrone one of the Solimans, for the purpose of usurping his place; when a voice, proceeding from the abyss of death, proclaimed; 'All is accomplished'. Instantaneously, the haughty forehead of the intrepid princess became corrugated with agony; she uttered a trmendous yell; and fixed, no more to be withdrawn, her right hand upon her heart, which was to become a receptacle of eternal fire. (35)

The same punishment overtakes Vathek and Nouronihar, who lose all hope of salvation and recoil from each other with loathing. Each begins his lonely wandering for an eternity of anguish. The novel ends with a moral warning to those of mankind whose curiosity would surpass imposed limits and offers, as contrast to the plight of Vathek, the image of Gulchenrouz, passing 'whole ages in undisturbed tranquility, and in the pure happiness of childhood'. (36)

In outline, Vathek is the story of a satanic quest for knowledge, for riches, and for the ultimate in physical gratification, but it ends with the hero damned and caught forever in the awesome and invincible grip of the power of darkness. It is a world of feast and famine, a world of irresistible extremes. The Giaour punishes Vathek for his initial unkindness by giving him an insatiable thirst; when he is cured and the Giaour and Caliph are

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(35) Beckford, Vathek. p. 119.

(36) Ibid. p. 120.

momentarily reconciled to each other, they both eat and drink prodigiously. Vathek has a great taste for good food and young damsels. Whether appetite is being stifled or allowed to run wild, food is an important element in this book. Physical hunger is a constant theme and, as it is the most fully represented, it seems to stand for all the powerful lusts of the body.

In this world of extremes, the landscapes, too, alternate between the refined and crude, the oppulent and the barren, between Persian gardens, arbours of roses, with jessamine and honeysuckle, oranges, cedars, and citron trees, pomegranates and violets on the one hand, and wild romantic chasms, horrific heights, lonely deserts, and grim caves on the other. The lushness is Persian; the wildness, the horror, the danger, the coldness that calls for strength are Arabian. Sometimes the scene is neat and precise, sometimes vague and perplexing; and the grandiose architectural finale is a combination of all three elements. The ending stands apart from the rest because it is almost a set piece, designed to contain the rich architectural visions that the 1781 Christmas party evoked:

> The Caliph and Nouronihar beheld each other with amazement, at finding themselves in a palace, which, though roofed with a vaulted ceiling, was so spacious and lofty, that, at first, they took it for an immeasurable plain. But their eyes, at length, growing familiar to the grandeur of the surrounding objects, they extended their view to those at a distance; and discovered rows of columns and arcades, which gradually diminished, till they terminated in a point radiant as the sun, when he darts his last beams athwart the ocean. The pavement, strewed over with gold dust and saffron, exhaled so subtile an odour, as almost overpowered them. They, however, went on; and observed an infinity of censers, in which ambergrise and the wood of aloes, were continually burning. Between the several columns, were placed tables; each, spread with a profusion of viands; and wines, of every species, sparkling in vases of crystal. A throng of Genii, and other fantastic spirits, of either sex,

> danced lasciviously, at the sound of music, which issued from beneath.
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> In the midst of this immense hall, a vast multitude was incessantly passing; who severally kept their right hands on their hearts, without once regarding any thing around them. They had all, the livid paleness of death...(37)

Vathek is a fantastic and unreal tale, but the great attention which Beckford paid to the delineation of oriental scenes, customs and manners, drawn from authentic sources, gives it a realistic effect. His clever imitation of Eastern style seems to present the story as a genuine product of that region. Beckford, himself a traveller, ransacked many travel accounts in order to be exact in his Eastern scenes. When Vathek sets out from Samarah towards the subterranean palace of Istakar, where the talismans and treasures of pre-adamite kings are promised to him by the Giaour, the journey is faithfully described. Beckford gives an impressive picture of the ruins of Persepolis, probably based upon the description given by Jean Chardin in his Voyages en Pérse, and on the illustrations in Corneille le Brun's Voyages. (38)

Chardin's account of the ruins of Persepolis is long and exceptionally detailed. Among other things, he describes a terrace: 'La terrasse est soutenue d'un mur de marbre noir, de cent quinze pas de face', and a huge staircase: 'Cet escalier a en ligne droite vingt-deux pieds et quelques pouces de hauteur, et il est composé de cent trois marches ou degrés.' Chardin also writes of the huge figures on the pillars, which seemed to be those of animals: 'des chevaux, des lions, des

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(37) Beckford, Vathek. p.109.

(38) Jean Chardin, Voyages ... en Pérse, et autres Lieux de L'Orient. 3 tom (Amsterdam, 1711), III, pp. 99-139.
Corneille Le Brun, Voyages ... par la Moscovie, en Pérse, et aux Index Orientales. 2 tom. (Amsterdam, 1718), II, pp.270-271.

rhinocéros, ou des éléphans'. (38A[39])

In Vathek the description of Istakar is evocative and general, rather than exact like that in Chardin. However, Beckford's reading of Chardin is evident in the short flashes with which he touches in the awe-inspiring scene: 'the terrace of black marble', the 'vast staircase' and 'the colossal forms of four creatures, composed of the leopard and the griffin'. Chardin probably also gave Beckford the 'gloomy watch-towers', the 'two towering rocks' and 'the royal mausoleums'. (38B[40])

The description of the Hall of Eblis under these ruins is a memorable passage in Vathek. Persians traditionally believed that Persepolis contained the fabulous treasures of their ancient kings, including such articles as 'the carbuncle of Giamschid'. The almost forgotten religion of their founders was associated with mysterious rites and magical performances, and its followers were called the Sun, or fire-worshippers. With such attributes Beckford thought the ruins the right place for the punishment of

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(38A[39]) J.Chardin, Voyages en Pérse (Paris, 1811 reprint) VIII, 251, 254, 256.

(38B[40]) Beckford, Vathek, pp. 106 and 107.

a selfish and covetous Caliph. The Mogul Tales inspired Beckford with the image of the burning hearts of the victims of that subterranean palace. The Adventures of Abdallah, Son of Hafif, as noted above, provided him with the globe of fire and the other details of the Hall of Eblis. (~~39~~ 41)

Beckford made use not only of the mythology and religious conceptions of Muslims, but also of those of the ancient Persians. Although the name of Anquetil Duperron does not appear in the Catalogue of Beckford's Library, it is possible that he knew of the discoveries of the Frenchman concerning Zoroastrianism. The information about Iranian mythology in Vathek is mainly derived from Chardin and Richardson. Beckford takes the names of Eblis from the Koran, but his Eblis is not the fallen and miserable angel of Muslim belief, or the grotesque demon of fairy tales. Rather he is the mighty representative of the negative principles of sin and evil in the world, and, as we have seen, is very like Milton's Satan. He is more than a mere echo of Milton, however; Beckford's portrayal of Eblis is the first successful attempt at humanising the demonic figure, in fiction. In a way, Beckford's portrayal ushers in the new conception of Satan shared by some Romantic writers.

The book enjoyed an enormous popularity, and G. Clarke wrote to Beckford: 'Vathek is selling here amazingly, ... some who have never read Vathek now are led to do so by their having become acquainted with the Book, in short you have caused Byron to fall very low in the Barometer'. (~~40~~ 42) The terrible eye of Vathek which killed with a glance,

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(~~39~~ 41) Conant, Oriental Tale. p. 38 ff.

(~~40~~ 42) Melville, The Life ... . p. 340.

and the burning hearts of the votaries of Eblis in the subterranean inferno impressed themselves on the minds of the reading public. A principal factor underlying the work's romantic appeal was undoubtedly its celebration of personal egotism, the indulgence of which was often a leading motive of much Romantic literature. While Beckford was not alone in such flamboyant self-indulgence, his example, both in his personal life and in his fiction, gave added impetus to this side of Romanticism. Vathek also stimulated another important element of Romanticism, the interest in non-classical and (at least to most European readers) exotic literatures, while by its successful fusion of Gothic romance and oriental subjects and imagery Vathek gave new spirit to the study and emulation of oriental literature, a development which markedly increased from the end of the eighteenth century and pervaded much of the nineteenth.

Vathek's influence is very aptly pointed out by Gibb, although he probably exaggerates the newness of the taste to which the book appealed. Gibb maintains that, by its fusion of Gothic romance with oriental subjects and imagery, Vathek

prefigures and influenced much of the imaginative work of the next fifty years. 'More important', he says, 'was its indirect influence, its share in predisposing public taste for the reversion to the non-classical and medieval which goes by the name of the Romantic movement'. (43) Thus, Vathek gave new spirit to the oriental literature which was beginning to increase in volume from the end of the eighteenth century. Byron and Southey were so impressed by Beckford's tale that they borrowed material directly for their own verse tales.

Byron publicly acknowledged his indebtedness to it in many of his oriental works. His limited acquaintance with genuinely oriental literature prevented him from having a first hand knowledge of the exotic East, and it is often remarked that Byron's earlier notions of his heroes and himself were influenced by Beckford's Eblis. It is easy to see the similarities between the early Byronic heroes and Eblis, who had the appearance of a young man, 'whose noble and regular features seemed to have been tarnished by malignant vapours. In his large eyes appeared both pride and despair; his flowing hair retained some resemblance to that of an angel of light'. (44) In the notes to his poem 'The Giaour' Byron frankly admits his indebtedness to Vathek for the fiery hearts:

> To wander round lost Eblis' throne;
> And, fire unquench'd, unquenchable,
> Around, within, thy heart shall dwell;
> Nor ear can hear nor tongue can tell
> The tortures of that inward hell! (45)

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(43) Gibb, Legacy of Islam. p. 201.

(44) Vathek. p. 111.

(45) Byron "Giaour', Poetical Works. p. 259. Lines: 750-754.

Byron also acknowledges that some ideas expressed in the following passages in the 'Siege of Corinth' were adapted from Vathek:

> There is a light cloud by the moon -
> 'Tis passing, and will pass full soon -
> If, by the time its vapouring sail
> Hath ceased her shaded orb to vail,
> Thy heart within thee is not changed,
> The God and man are both avenged;
> Dark will thy doom be, darker still
> Thine immortality of ill. (46)

He writes in a note to it that Vathek 'is' a work to which I have before referred, and never recur to, or read, without a renewal of gratification.' (47)

Again, in his poetical drama, 'Manfred', Byron's debt is seen through a note at the beginning of the scene IV, 'The Hall of Arimanes, Arimanes on his Throne, a Globe of Fire, surrounded by the Spirits'. (48) Moreover, he makes similar allusions to his great admiration for and obligations to Vathek in his 'Childe Harold':

> On sloping mounds, or in the vale beneath,
> Are domes where whilome kings did make repair;
> But now the wild flowers round them only breathe;
> Yet ruin'd splendour still is lingering there.
> And yonder towers the Prince's palace fair:
> There thou too, Vathek! England's wealthiest son,
> Once form'd thy Paradise, as not aware,
> When wanton Wealth her mightiest deeds hath done,
> Meek Peace voluptuous lures was ever wont to shun. (49)

Among other poets apparently influenced by Vathek was

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(46) Byron, "The Siege of Corinth", Poetical Works. p. 326.

(47) Byron, Poetical Works. p. 899.

(48) Ibid. p. 399.

(49) Byron, "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage", I, XXII. Poetical Works, p. 184.

Coleridge. Although he was never able to establish when Coleridge read the book, J.L. Lowes detects numerous traces of Vathek in Coleridge's poetry, and in particular in 'Kubla Khan'. He also suggests that the glittering eye of the Ancient Mariner may derive from Beckford. If Lowes is right, the influence fell onto fertile ground, for Coleridge had discovered The Arabian Nights at the age of six, and so strong were the 'feelings and fancies stirred up' (48) in him, that he:

> was haunted by spectres, whenever I was in the dark - and I distinctly remember the anxious & fearful eagerness, with which I used to watch the window, in which the books lay - & whenever the Sun lay upon them, I would seize it, carry it by the wall, & bask, & read -. My Father found out the effect, which these books had produced - and burnt them. So I became a dreamer. (49)

This love of The Arabian Nights was one of the links between Coleridge and Wordsworth, who writes in the fifth book of The Prelude of his:

> little yellow, canvas-covered book,
> A slender abstract of the Arabian tales.

Hearing of the existence of a complete text, the young Wordsworth and a friend planned to save up and to buy it, but they never succeeded.

In The Road to Xanadu, Lowes relates Vathek to 'Kubla Khan' He suggests that Coleridge must have read the book (50), for

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(48) S.T.Coleridge, 'EssayIV', The Friend, ed. B.E.Rooke (1969), I, 148.

(49) S.T.Coleridge, Collected Letters, ed. E.L.Griggs (1956), I, 20

(50) John Livingstone Lowes, The Road to Xanadu. (London, 1951), p. 398.

Coleridge's dream is precisely in the spirit of the early pages of Vathek:

> There were the Palaces of the Five Senses -- "pleasure-houses" par excellence; there was a Paradise, with cedars and incense-bearing trees; there were four fountains, like the "four sacred rivers" which watered Eden; and at the foot of the hill of the Four Fountains, there was "an immense gulph" or "chasm". (50)

The damsel and the dulcimer are also quite appropriate to the Mohammedan Paradise, and all these images, set against the sunny back-ground of the dome with caves of ice, present a typically oriental conception of pleasure.

The pleasure dome of 'Kubla Khan', built with pomp and show, and having all kinds of objects for the gratification of the senses, reminds one of Beckford's attempts to live in a world of his own creation in which everything is according to his taste. Kubla has been identified with a man who utilizes his creative energies to make his own paradise. But, like Vathek, Kubla Khan has serious faults of character. He is predominantly an oriental despot who does not create the dome himself, but decrees with an absolute will. The dome comes into being through the creative energies of others. They have no choice but to build the pleasure dome on a sacred spot as Kubla wills it. In this forced exploitation of creative power Kubla commits his most serious crime. The poem as a whole, with its evident concern to understand and to evoke the act of poetic creation itself, suggests that such absolutism of the spirit as Kubla's must prevent all but an imperfect and seriously flawed realisation of imaginative power. Kubla Khan's determination to build a pleasure house on the bank

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(50) John Livingstone Lowes, The Road to Xanadu. (London, 1951), p. 398.

of the sacred river and to exploit its water to feed the rills and rivulets of his paradise symbolises, therefore, the abuse of human creativity. In fact the River Alph is not part of Kubla's palace; it is something above it. It is a kind of higher reality which is temporarily harnessed and eclipsed by Kubla's lust and power. The sharp antithesis between the sacred river and the pleasure dome which can never be permanently reconciled has something in common with the moral antithesis of good and evil. In this sense 'Kubla Khan', like Vathek, has a theme of crime and punishment. While he was writing 'Kubla Khan' Coleridge was greatly preoccupied with the tremendous difficulties involved in being true to and faithfully evoking the workings of the imagination as he understood it. He had recently expressed his near despair in a letter to John Thelwall, written a few days before the composition of the poem which foreshadows its theme:

> I can at times feel strongly the beauties, you describe, in themselves, and for themselves - but more frequently all things appear little - all the knowledge, that can be acquired, child's play - the universe itself - what but an immense heap of little things? (54)

In the opening lines of 'Kubla Khan', we read about the 'romantic chasm':

> But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
> Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
> A savage place! as holy and enchanted... (52/55)

This again reminds one of Vathek, the tumult which he hears when he looks over the edge of the abyss, is the tumult of waters, which rises with the voices, as in dream, from the abyss. This deep romantic chasm in 'Kubla Khan' has been described by Coleridge as savage and enchanted, and full of superstitious acts. Lowes' conclusion that a reminiscence of

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(54) Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Collected Letters. ed. Earl Leslie Griggs, 6 vols. (Oxford, 1956-1971), 19th October 1797, I, pp. 348-349.

(52/55) Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Poetical Works. ed. Ernest Hartley Coleridge, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1912), I, p. 297, Lines: 12-14.

Vathek flashed through the interwoven fancies of the vision is supported by the above instances. It also shows that the influence of Vathek and his creator reached some of the finest and well known poets of the early nineteenth century.

Vathek possesses all the virtues and faults of the period in which it was composed. It is infused by the spirit of unrest which is essentially characteristic of the Romantic movement. Although Beckford had never been to the East, he handled his rich store of oriental material and imagery very effectively. The exotic brilliance of the various scenes is enhanced by apt allusions to oriental legends, traditions, customs and descriptions of Eastern localities. It shows that Beckford was unusually close to the genuine tales through which he explored new regions of his own psyche, and that, for him, the Orient meant new possibilities for the exploration of forbidden areas of human experience. He was a man of sensibility, and he poured out his dreams, his imaginations, his feelings in letters and diaries, journals and above all, in novels. Whether buying Turner or Blake drawings or magnificent folio volumes, or building Gothic towers, he was always pursuing the flights of his own imagination, and it is those flights that his oriental tales seek to capture. In his self-absorbed fantasies, Beckford inevitably created a satanic and Byronic hero, and put him into the oriental settings that had appealed to his imagination since his rapturous childhood discovery of The Arabian Nights, and he carried those fantasies as far as they would go. But he was, nonetheless, serious about his orientalism: it started as a purely private passion, totally remote from Sir William Jones's humane and

comprehensive intellectual ambitions, but even so, Beckford cared enough to read Persian and Arabic, and to learn whatever he could. He did not need to use his vast fortune in order to travel to the East, because he was a voyager of the imagination; a writer who seems to reach beyond his own generation and century into the next age, that of Romanticism.

NEW ERA OF ENGLISH INTEREST IN THE ORIENT

It is not by chance that the stage of orientalism represented by Vathek coincided with the years of the Romantic revival in English literature. The Romantic temperament hankered after the geographically remote, as well as the remote in time, and so found rich sources of inspiration in the works of Sir William Jones and William Beckford, and descriptions given by travellers to far-off lands. The Romantics paid greater attention to details of local colour and general background, where details of this nature were completely disregarded. M.P. Conant has shown that the tide of oriental imitations with inaccurate pseudo-oriental background, much in vogue early in the century, had spent itself by 1784:

> ... new forces were already at work, which were to bring the Orient much nearer to England than ever before. The growth of the Indian empire, of commerical intercourse with the East, and of the new democratic belief in the brotherhood of the whole world helped to break down England's insularity and to awaken a fresh interest in the Orient. In letters, this spirit was first expressed by the increased number of travellers' accounts, and by the accompanying activity of orientalists under the guidance of Sir William Jones. Direct translations from oriental languages into English made a notable contribution to English knowledge of Eastern life and literature, and had a great share in turning the imaginations of nineteenth-century poets and story-tellers toward the use of oriental material. A fresh chapter in the history of oriental influence upon England thus opened. (1)

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(1) Conant, Oriental Tale .... . pp. 255-256.

There were, thus, towards the end of the eighteenth-century, a number of new factors which brought the East much nearer to England than ever before. In this chapter, I will attempt to describe the nature of these factors, to assess their relative importance in the history of orientalism, and to trace their influence in the works of some Romantic poets.

In this period, there were very important changes taking place in the realm of commerce, and two of these in particular influenced Britain's relations with the East. Firstly, there was the recognition by the most far-sighted and economically gifted statesmen of the time that the old mercantile system was archaic and was a major cause of Britain's loss of her American colonies. The younger Pitt was amongst those to hold this view. He became acquainted while still at Cambridge with Adam Smith's The Wealth of Nations (1776), containing vigorous arguments in favour of free trade, and then, when he was an M.P. during the coalition ministry of Fox and Lord North in 1783, Pitt declared his determination to put Smith's theories into practice. By the following year Pitt was Prime Minister and he started to introduce policies based on the thinking in The Wealth of Nations. He began by replacing the exorbitant, ineffective duties on necessary imports by lower and effective ones, and these lower taxes were held throughout Pitt's long ministry. Then, early in the next century, an assault on the old Navigation Acts led even more directly to the adoption of free trade. Thus, a departure from what had been accepted economic principles led to an era of enlightened overseas trade and this in turn led to the growth of England's empire in the East.

1784 was a decisive year for commerce, not only because of the new lower import duties, but also because it saw the incorporation of the East India Company. The ~~founding of this~~ company, ~~was the second of the two important changes decisively influencing England's relations with the East at the end of the eighteenth century~~ founded in 1600, had a monopoly of trade to India until 1813. The East India Company became a national institution, and its net profit doubled within one five year period. This success was undoubtedly due to Pitt's economic legislation and to his placing the resources of government behind the company.

In the political field, Pitt's India Bill held great significance both for England and for India. It represented the first conscious attempt to establish a unified policy towards any important part of the empire. Under the Bill, a government board of control was given responsibility for Indian affairs, mainly in order to counter official corruption in India, and in order to further humanitarian ideals being propounded by Burke and other writers at this time. This policy with respect to India led to the formation of similar schemes in other regions of the empire, and culminated in the inclusive and uniform policy achieved under Queen Victoria. Thus, Pitt's Bill put a whole process of development into motion.

A new pressure which was brought to bear on English politics at this time arose out of the activities of France on the international scene. From the time of the Seven Years' War (1756-1763) to the Battle of Waterloo (1815), England and France were pitted against one another in continuing conflict. Napoleon was the central figure on the political stage, especially at the very end of the eighteenth century, and he directed

Europe's attention to the East by his expedition to Egypt. The primary aim of this project was to find some compensation for the loss of the French empire in India. However, Napoleon was also in search of strategic supremacy; he regarded control of Egypt and of the Red Sea as a preparatory step that would later enable the Indian Empire to be recovered from England. These activities on the part of the French made it vitally necessary for England to counter, and, at the Battle of the Nile and the defence of Acre, England was successful in thwarting all French plans for the East.

One of the results of this conflict with the French in the East was the formulation by Britain of a new policy of friendliness towards those Eastern nations which had hitherto been considered rather unimportant. Exactly what this policy meant in practical terms can be seen by examining the commercial and political relationships of the British government in India with Arabia and Persia at the turn of the nineteenth century. In 1798 a very important trade agreement was signed by the Sultan of Muscat in South-West Arabia and the Governor General of India. In the following year, Sir John Malcolm, a diplomat was sent from India to the Persian court, especially for the purpose of establishing relations with the Shah, so that a treaty could be signed. Malcolm's mission was but the first of several similar journeys undertaken by British diplomats, for this first conciliatory attempt was only a partial success. During the next two decades, Harford Jones Brydges and Sir Gore Ouseley both made diplomatic visits to Persia, and finally, relations were established which made

possible a great revival of British trade with that country. (2)

Another aspect of Britain's foreign relations which needs to be considered concerns Russia, which had long been feared as a strong competitor for trade in the East. In the 1780s it became clear to Pitt that Catherine II, the Russian monarch, was shifting in her attitude towards England. She refused to renew the commercial treaty of 1766, under which Britain had been granted precedence over other nations in trade with Russia, and under which Britain had been treated as the most favoured of the nations using Russian ports. Before Pitt's troublesome period, trade with Russia was very important to Britain's economy but Catherine effectively stopped this. British trade with Turkey was also on a large scale, but when Russia seemed likely to gain control of Constantinople, Pitt foresaw that this trade, too, would cease. Accordingly, in 1791, he supported Prussia in an attempt to keep Russia and Austria out of Turkey. He encountered immense opposition to his policy in the House of Commons and he was forced to withdraw British troops. However, subsequent events proved him right, and Britain was increasingly faced with the possibility of Egypt in Russian hands becoming a highway to India.

Thus, the Near East, important both for its trade and its geographical position, acquired a hitherto unknown prominence in English political life at the turn of the century. It was vitally necessary for Britain to have links with the area, and also to protect those lines of communication which offered

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(2) Abu-al-Quasim Taheri, The History of Commercial and Political Relations Between England and Iran. (Tehran, 1975), I, pp. 350-388.

access, through the Near East, to the heart of the British Empire, India. This political importance was in turn reflected in the attention paid to literature from the Near and Middle East and to books about these areas.

In addition to these commercial and political factors which influenced the development in England of interest in literature about the East there were also social factors. During the first quarter of the nineteenth century, travelling became a more widely popular and congenial activity than it had ever been before. This change led to the growth of travel literature which in turn increased the accuracy and realism of the Englishman's picture of the East. Travel and travel books proved to be very popular in the early nineteenth century, owing to a combination of several historical events. The end of the Continental war in 1815 and new developments in the industrial field meant that hundreds of middle-class English people began to travel. Also, directly prompting interest in travel and therefore travel literature, was the increasing prominence in London of a large group of people who had spent most of their lives in the East. By 1810 they owned the houses in a whole area of London, and wealthy Anglo-Indians were now accepted into respectable and genteel society.

The intellectual temper of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries also had a part to play in turning people's attention and interest towards the East. Rationalistic tendencies flourished in the eighteenth century, and they are represented in the literature of the period by a large number of writings severely criticizing ideals and materials which were inherited from the past. Then, alongside criticism of outdated notions, there was much work of re-interpretation and synthesizing, and evidence of

the new synthesis appears in the work of Gray, Gibbon, Adam Smith, Johnson and Burke, to mention only the most important figures. Also, in creative literature, there were new sources of energy, a re-awakening of the imagination. These were changes associated with the Romantic Movement, and these helped to arouse interest in the East.

There was a tendency for writers to seek an escape through their works into remote places or time. This was possibly because, for a long time during the eighteenth century, reason had been accorded too great an importance, and this became burdensome, causing creative artists to seek an escape. The Orient was just one means of providing this escape. It is possible, however, to draw a distinction between a healthy and unhealthy literary use of Oriental material. The appeal of the remote had positive qualities in stimulating a real interest in other lands, their peoples and their cultures. However, there was often, also, an unhealthy striving after surprise, mystery and horror, and it was from these tendencies that the Gothic revival derived many of its excesses.

One of the best-known contributors to the body of English literature in which the East is the theme or background is Robert Southey (1774-1843) whose work we have already mentioned. He was the first notable English poet to respond to the enthusiasm for Eastern materials. Thalaba the Destroyer, first published in 1801, is the first of a series of long poems designed to show 'the most remarkable forms of Mythology which have at any time obtained among mankind, by making each the groundwork of

narrative poem'. (3) Other important poems in the series include Madoc (1805), The Curse of Kehama (1810) and Roderick (1814). Of Thalaba, Southey wrote:

> I began with the Mahommedan religion, as being that with which I was then best acquainted myself, and of which every one who had read The Arabian Nights' Entertainment possessed all the knowledge necessary for readily understanding and entering into the intent and spirit of the poem. (4)

It is mainly an Arabian story, but to give a comprehensive view of the Muslims, Persians are also included. He wrote to W. Taylor: 'It will have all the pomp of Mohammedan fable, relieved by scenes of Arabian life, and these contrasted again by the voluptuousness of Persian scenery and manners'. (5) Southey's main concern was to make his description of the myths, religion and mores of the Muslims as accurate as possible, and this led him to draw extensively on the writings of Orientalists and travellers. The Poem clearly shows the influence of Bernard Picard's Religious Ceremonies, a book which greatly interested him. (6) He had a life-long love of folklore and mythology but, on the other hand, he had little sympathy with Muslim culture, and he did not agree with Jones's high estimate of oriental literature. His fervent Christianity would not have allowed him to sympathise with the culture of an alien creed. He seems to have chosen oriental subject matter because it was novel and romantically remote.

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(3) Robert Southey, Poetical Works. (London, 1844), p. xiv.

(4) Ibid. pp. xiv-xv.

(5) William Taylor, A Memoir of Life and Writings of William Taylor of Norwich. 2 vols. (London, 1843), I, p. 224.

(6) William Haller, The Early Life of Southey. (New York, 1917), p. 37.

Southey read very widely, and his usual method was to make copious notes for future use in his own compositions. He acquired a copy of Anquetil Du Perron's Zend-Avesta in 1799, his aims being to satisfy an old curiosity about the book, perhaps to derive some assistance for Thalaba, and also to gain the necessary information to make the Peruvian hero of one of his poems a follower of Zoroaster. These aims were reported in a letter to William Taylor, and five days after his purchase of the book, Southey wrote to the same correspondent: 'I have now extracted the kernel of the Zend-Avesta. The outline of the mythology is fine, and well adapted for poetry, because the system is comprehensible'. (7) The following year Southey wrote Thalaba, planning to bring 'the whole mythology' of Zoroaster into the foreground of the poem.

Southey wanted to describe, in Thalaba, a scene in the continuous battle that Zoroaster believed was being fought between the agents of good and the agents of evil. The narrative recounts the adventures and difficulties of Thalaba, a character resembling a male Joan of Arc, who triumphs in the end, because of his unshakable conviction in the justice of his cause. The poem opens with a description of the young Thalaba, and of how he came to be chosen as 'the appointed one' to destroy the race of magicians attached to the seminary of Domdaniel, a cavern 'under the roots of the sea'. Abdaldar, one of the most wicked magicians, makes several attempts to kill him, but is blasted by the simmom in the desert. Then Thalaba learns, through using Abdaldar's

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(7) Taylor, A Memoir. I, p. 304.

magic ring, that his father, Hoderiah, and all his kindred, have been brutally slain by Okba, one of the sorcerer's followers. Thalaba vows vengeance and then sets out to see that this vengeance is carried out. Eventually, he learns that the talisman which will enable him to carry out his task is Faith, and protected by this and the magic ring, he makes his way to Domdaniel and destroys it with all its occupants. Thalaba is killed while doing this, but, as a reward for the success of his mission, he is reunited in Paradise with his belived Oneiza, the wife whom death had snatched from him on their wedding night.

The story is an oriental tale with a Muslim setting. Thalaba's enemies, the evil magicians possessed of supernatural powers, threaten his life many times, and he is saved only with the help of God. He receives guidance from Simourgh and Harot and Marot, two fallen angels of the Koran, who are imprisoned in the ruins of Babylon and guarded by Zohak, the demonic figure of Shah-Nameh. The evil magicians are closely in league with the formidable Eblis, the equivalent of Satan. They have murdered Thalaba's family because their auguries revealed to them that their destroyer would come from his family. Thus Thalaba is the hero who is divinely appointed to exterminate all the magicians.

Thalaba is a poem in which the incidents have no significance if divorced from the moral principle underlying the work. The action is simply a development of this moral principle. The notion of faith in Destiny constitutes the main feature of the poem, and all the parts are vehicles for this moral principle. Addressing the magician of Domdaniel he says:

> Ye can shatter the dwellings of man;
> Ye can open the womb of the rock;
> Ye can shake the foundations of earth,
> But not the Word of God:
> But not one letter can ye change
> Of what his Will hath written. (8)

Thalaba describes himself as a 'male Joan of Arc' and it is noteworthy that there are a number of similarities between this story and the stories surrounding Joan. A supreme power, whether called Destiny or Providence, has marked both hero and heroine out from mankind. In both cases, birth and environment nurture virgin purity and lofty aspirations. Both are charged with a 'heavenly mission', and are sustained through hardships and trials by the sole miraculous power of Faith.

The moral aspect of Thalaba had a great appeal for some distinguished writers in the nineteenth century. John Henry Newman was an ardent reader of Southey's poems and approved of their ethical content. He described Thalaba as 'the most sublime of English poems' and in his retrospective survey of his life, Apologia (1864), he associated this poem very closely with the development of his own mind. Describing the moral sublimity of Thalaba, Newman wrote:

> In his use of the doctrines of a future life Southey is admirable. Other writers are content to conduct their heroes to temporal happiness; Southey refuses present comfort to ... but carries him on through suffering to another world. (9)

Thus, for Newman, it is the spirit of faith rather than adventure, which contributes most to the pleasure we enjoy when reading Thalaba.

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(8) Southey, "Thalaba The Destroyer", Bk. II. 23. Poetical Works. p. 288.

(9) John Henry Newman, Essays. 2 vols. (London, 1872), I, p. 16.

The seed of the romance was the History of Maugraby, the tale of the magician in the continuation of The Arabian Nights. (10) However, Southey introduced many episodes from other sources. He made use of D'Herbelot's Bibliotheque Orientale, the Persian Lyrics of John Nott, and Joseph Champion's translation of the Shah-Nameh. Thus, for example, the story of Zohak, which occupies the whole of Book five, is taken from Shah-Nameh. It is possible to identify yet other literary sources, but not with the same degree of certainty as those listed above: the adventures of Thelaba and Oneiza in the Garden of Aloadin, for example, may have been suggested by the Turkish Story of Jawad. (11)

In addition to these debts to other poems and stories, Southey's debt to travel books for source material is evident throughout the whole poem of Thalaba. Not only in the very full and elaborate footnotes but also in the text, there appears evidence of the author's debt to all sorts of travel books about Syria, Egypt, Arabia, Persia and other oriental countries. For example, Southey's description of a terrible sandstorm is evidently borrowed from Bruce's account in his Travels to Discover the Sources of the Nile and is a typical example of his procedure when using other writers' material. Southey employs the sandstorm as an agent to destroy one of the evil magicians who is attempting to seduce Thalaba in the desert:

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(10) Southey, "Thalaba", 'preface', Poetical Works. p. 213.

(11) Translated into English by J.W. Gibb, (Glasgow, 1884).

Columns of sand came moving on,
Red in the burning ray,
Like Obelisks of fire,
They rush'd before the driving wind.
Vain were all thoughts of flight! ...

High; high in heaven upcurl'd
The dreadful sand-spouts moved;
Swift as the whirlwind that impell'd their way,
They came toward the travellers!
The old Magician shriek'd,
And lo! the formost bursts,
Before the whirlwind's force,
Scattering afar a burning shower of sand. (12)

This passage can be compared with Bruce's description to indicate which elements Southey has found useful:

> We were here at once surprised and terrified by a sight, surely the most magnificent in the world. In that vast expanse of desert ... we saw a number of prodigious pillars of sand at different distances, at times moving with great celerity, at others stalking with a majestic slowness: at intervals we thought they were coming in a very few moments to overwhelm us ... again they would retreat so as to be almost out of sight, their tops reaching to the very clouds ... About noon they began to advance with considerable swiftness upon us, the wind being very strong at north. Eleven of them ranged along the distance of three miles. The greatest diameter of the largest appeared to me at the distance as if it would measure ten feet. They retired from us with a wind at S.E. leaving an impression upon my mind to which I can give no name; though surely one ingredient in it was fear, with a considerable deal of wonder and astonishment. It was vain to think of flying, the swiftest horse or the fastest sailing ship could be of no use to carry us out of this danger, and the full persuasion of this rivetted me as if to the spot where I stood ... On the 15th the same appearance of moving pillars of sand presented themselves to us, only they seemed to be more in number and less in size ... They began immediately after sun-rise, like a thick wood, and almost darkened the sun. His rays shining through them for near an hour gave them an appearance of pillars of fire. (13)

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(12) Southey, "Thalaba", Bk. IV, 30-31, Poetical Works. pp. 251-252.

(13) James Bruce, Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile. 8 vols, (Edinburgh, 1790), IV, pp. 553-556.

It is necessary to quote this passage at length to demonstrate Southey's usual procedure in dealing with his travel-book sources in this poem. Bruce's description is much fuller, and Southey uses only a few of Bruce's details: the colour, size and speed of the moving columns of sand, for example. On the other hand, there are close verbal echoes which make it impossible to doubt Southey's source: 'Vain were all thoughts of flight', for example, is evidently a poetic inversion of Bruce's: 'It was vain to think of flying'. Southey's 'moving on' probably reflects the influence of Bruce's 'moving with great celerity' and 'moving pillars of sand'. On the other hand, Southey rejects 'pillars of sand', an expression which Bruce uses twice, as well as 'pillars of fire', replacing them with 'Columns of sand', 'sand-spouts' and 'Obelisks of fire'. Possibly, the poet was making a deliberate and conscious change here, or perhaps, in the last example, he was unconsciously echoing his own reading about ancient Egypt. Most important of all, there is a feeling of generality about Southey's description which is certainly lacking from Bruce's. The result in Thalaba is that a pillar of sand seems not so much like a pillar of sand as like a deus ex machina for the destruction of evil. This characteristic, in which places or objects described do not have the clear identity one would expect, persists throughout most of Southey's descriptive passages.

Southey's admiration for Samuel Henley's learned notes in Vathek persuaded him to accompany his poem with a large number of annotations. Southey's view was that, even if a book lacked other merits, at least it could impart knowledge. Thus, for example, three pages of notes are appended to a short

passage describing Baghdad. Chardin's description of Tabriz's bazars and houses, Tavernier's account of how the sunset was accompanied in some Persian cities with the 'clang of clarions and drums', Maringy's story of the construction of Baghdad by Almanzor, all find place in Southey's picture of the city. (14)

(14) Southey's "Thalaba", Poetical Works. pp. 254-256.

The main educational purpose of the poem was to present the chief teachings of Islam, as Southey understood them. For example, we know Southey's conception of the Muslim attitude towards fatalism, and this conception is presented in Thalaba. He wrote that: 'Mohammed included the doctrine of fatalism because it is the most useful creed for the conqueror. The blind passiveness which it causes has completed the degradation, and for ever impeded the improvement of all Mohammedan nations'. (15)

Then in the poem, on an occasion of intolerable grief caused by the will of Providence, Thalaba is advised by an old 'dervish':

> Repine not, O my Son!
> In wisdom and in mercy Heaven inflicts
> Its painful remedies. (16)

The vengeance of Allah is also unreasonable. A magician who is punished for his own sins by the death of his innocent daughter, cries out at Thalaba in frenzy:

> "Ay! Look and triumph!" he exclaim'd:
> "This is the justice of thy God!
> A righteous God is he, to let
> His Vengeance fall upon the innocent head!..
> Curse thee, curse thee, Thalaba!" (17)

The Islam of Southey lays stress on pre-destination and absolute submission to destiny, and the teachings of Islam are held responsible for the despotism of Eastern rulers. If, in a battle, one of them takes 'the son for his eunuch, and the daughter for his concubine; if he orders the father to execute the child, it is what Destiny has appointed, and the Mohammedan says, ... God's will be done'. (18)

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(15) Robert Southey, The Cronicle of the Cid, from the Spanish. (London, 1808), p. xx.

(16) Southey, "Thalaba", Bk. VII, 17. Poetical Works. p. 280.

(17) Ibid. Bk. XI, 2. Poetical Works. p. 301.

(18) Southey, The Chronicle ... . p. xxii.

Possibly the most curious fact about Southey's orientalism, however, is that, unlike Byron, he was not sympathetic towards the oriental material which he used with so much success. He uses common Arabic or Persian words in his poem and generally gives an English equivalent which mars the realism of his descriptions. To Byron it is 'A Koran of illumined dyes' (19), but to Southey it is a holy Book:

> The Old Man's Solemn voice
> Intones the holy Book. (20)

Byron and Southey both delineate the same scene of the hour of Muslim prayer, but with a great difference:

Byron:
> Hark'. from the mosque the nightly solemn sound,
> The Muezzin's call doth shake the minaret,
> 'There is no God but God'. to prayer - lo'.
> God is Great'. (21)

Southey:
> But when the Cryer from the minaret
> Proclaims the midnight hour,
> Has thou a heart to see her? (22)

Byron's very exact use of the relevant term, ~~words~~ 'The Muezzin's call' instead of 'The cryer', which has an undertone of denunciation, greatly enhances the realism of his scene. Southey knew these words but his tendency towards the ~~orthodox religious~~ general, as well as metrical considerations, probably governed his choice. ~~sentiments were probably too strong to admit them in his poem~~. He adopted throughout his life an unfavourable attitude towards the people, religion and life of the East, and this is evident to the careful reader of Thalaba. Thus, for example, the fourth stanza of the poem reads:

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(19) Byron, "The Bride of Abydos", II, V. Poetical Works. p. 270 Line: 73.

(20) Southey, "Thalaba", Bk. III, 22. Poetical Works. p. 236.

(21) Byron, "Childe Harlod", II, LIX. Poetical Works. p. 203.

(22) Southey, "Thalaba", Bk. VIII, 6. Poetical Works. p. 275.

> At length collecting, Zeinab turn'd her eyes
> To heaven, and praised the Lord;
> 'He gave, he takes away!.'
> The pious sufferer cried,
> 'The Lord our God is good!.' (23)

Somewhat thoughtless
Southey then has a note concerning the line 'He gave, he takes away':

> I have placed a Scripture phrase in the mouth of Mahommedan; but it is a saying of Job, and there can be no impropriety in making a modern Arab speak like an ancient one; Resignation is particularly inculcated by Mahommed, and of all his percepts it is that which his followers have best observed; it is even the vice of the East. It had been easy to have made Zeinab speak from the Koran, if the tame language of the Koran could be remembered by the few who have toiled through its dull tautology. I thought it better to express a feeling of religion in that language with which our religious ideas are connected. (24)

It is easy to see what Southey is doing here with the morality of the Koran; he is substituting the Christian virtue of resignation for the oriental fatalism which he smugly condemns by calling it 'the vice of the East'. Southey's attitude towards Eastern literature was also one of general condemnation. In spite of the able and scholarly works of Jones with which Southey was well acquainted, he could see little of real worth in this material:

> A waste of ornament and labour characterises all the works of the Orientalists. I have seen illuminated manuscripts that must each have been the toil of many years, every page painted, not with representation of life and manners, but usually like the curves and lines of a Turkey carpet, conveying no idea whatever, as absurd to the eye as nonsense - verses to the ear. The little of their literature that has reached us is equally worthless. (25)

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(23) Southey, "Thalaba", Bk. I, 4. Poetical Works. p. 214

(24) Ibid. p. 214.

(25) Ibid. p. 215.

On the other hand, Southey's religious prejudices led him to appreciate the worth of oriental literature when it came to a twelfth century poet, Suzani Samarkandi, since Southey thought that Suzani was converted to Christianity. Southey wrote a small poem called 'Imitated From The Persian' in 1828. It ends:

> Father Almighty, who hast made me man,
> And bade me look to Heaven, for Thou art there,
> Accept my sacrifice and humble prayer,
> Four things which are not in thy treasury,
> I lay before thee, Lord, with this petition:
> My nothingness, my wants,
> My sins, and my contrition. (26)

This is the only occasion when Southey admires a Persian poet. At other times he shows his lack of interest in Persian poetry and says:

> Our barbarian scholars have called Ferdusi the Oriental Homer. Mr. Champion has published a specimen of his poem; the translation is said to be bad and certainly must be unfaithful, for it is in rhyme; but the vilest copy of a picture at least represents the subject and the composition. To make this Iliad of the East, as they have sacrilegiously styled it, a good poem, would be realizing the dreams of alchemy, and transmuting lead into gold. (27)

Southey's judgements on Persian literature are not usually based on any direct acquaintance with its work. He had read Bahar Danush, a collection of what were originally Indian tales, written in a bad and florid Persian and translated into English by Jonathan Scott. This

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(26) Southey, Poetical Works. p. 143.

cf. Suzani's poem:

> Four things I bring, O Lord, to thee, which exist not thy treasure within,
>
> Need I bring, and nothingness, and my crimes, and my deadly sin.

Quoted in: E.G. Browne, A Literary History of Persia. 4 vols. (Cambridge, 1969), II, p. 343.

(27) Southey, Poetical Works. p. 215.

translation was a literal one, and The Oriental Herald described it in the following uncomplimentary terms:

> ... as an instance of the ill success which must attend a violent departure from the idiom of our language (English), ... and of the manner in which some of the best productions of the East have frequently been transformed into English monsters. To a man of letters this is a subject of regret. (28)

It is evident Scott's Bahar Danush was not a sufficient basis for Southey to make any judgement concerning Persian literature. This did not deter him from doing so, however.

Again, through the author's lack of enthusiasm for the East, the passionate elements in Thalaba are very poorly expressed. Southey wrote on the East because interest in the region was widespread at the time. Thus, there is little of the passion proper to an Eastern tale of vengeance and fatality. Nevertheless, he has used the oriental material extensively, as is evident from the copious notes to the poem. There is hardly a page in this long poem which does not contain some illustration from travel literature. Such a parade of oriental learning would obviously have been unnecessary, especially when we remember Southey's coolness towards Eastern literature, if the reading public had not expected and relished it. In its author's life-time, Thalaba ran into five editions and some reprints. (29)

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(28) The Oriental Herald and Colonial Review, I, 1824, p. 90.

(29) The New Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature. ed. George Watson, (Cambridge, 1969), III, 255.

The editions of Thalaba: (1801, 1809, 1812, 1814, 1821) and the posthumous editions: (1846, 1853, 1856, 1860).

Thalaba is an important work in that it demonstrates the connection between orientalism and romanticism. It shows 'the impatience of the Romantic spirit to be off to new continents, to great remote legends, and to capture their grandeur'. (30) Romantic interest in landscape is seen in Southey's description of a night scene among the ruins of Babylon:

> Twilight and moonshine dimly mingling gave
> An awful light obscure,
> Evening not wholly closed,
> The Moon still pale and faint:
> An awful light obscure,
> Broken by many a mass of blackest shade;
> Long column stretching dark through weeds and moss,
> Broad length of lofty wall,
> Whose windows lay in light,
> And of their former shape, low arch'd or square,
> Rude outline on the earth
> Figured with long grass fringed. (31)

Thalaba contains some charming passages, especially where nature is described. In a beautiful phrase Coleridge referred to the poem's 'pastoral charms and wild streaming lights'. (32) The simple life of the hero, a nomad Arab, under the tent of Moath, man's relation to Nature and its effect on the formation of his character; the love and devotion of an artless people to each other, all are beautifully described. Southey's depiction of oriental scenery is also impressive. The admirable view of vast Arabian deserts, the palm-oases among the endless waves of sand, the high minarets against the background of a clear and starry sky, the colourful scenes of romantic cities and their busy bazaars and

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(30) Oliver Elton, A Survey of English Literature, (1780-1830). 2 vols. (London, 1933), II, p. 2.

(31) Southey, "Thalaba", Bk. V, 12. Poetical Works. p. 257.

(32) S.T. Coleridge, Biographia Literaria. 2 vols. ed. J. Shawcross, (Oxford, 1907), I, n.p. 221.

'carvanserais' are the things the reader will remember for ever. Another distinctive aspect of Thalaba is what can only be described as the peculiarly oriental tone, which is to a very great extent successfuly sustained throughout the poem. Thalaba has all the characteristic features of an oriental tale. Besides Eblis, the Afreets, magic and enchantments, we have an abundance of oriental legends, Muslim traditions and references to the Koran, The Arabian Nights and other oriental sources. Let us conclude with the following lines, so eloquent of Southey's sentiments:

> Thou too art fallen, Bagdad! City of Peace,
> Thou too hast had thy day;
> And loathsome Ignorance and brute Servitude,
> Pollute thy dwellings now,
> Erst for the Mighty and the Wise renown'd.
> O yet illustrious for remember'd fame, -
> Thy founder the Victorious, - and the pomp
> Of Haroun, for whose name by blood defiled,
> Yahia's, and the blameless Barmecides',
> Genius hath wrought salvation, - and the years
> When Science with the good Al-Maimon dwelt:
> So one day may the Crescent from thy Mosques
> Be pluck'd by wisdom, when the enlighten'd arm
> Of Eurpoe conquers to redeem the East'. (33)

These examples, and there are numerous others in the poem, show Southey relating to the Eastern influences of the time. Although, as we have seen, his deeply-held Christian beliefs led him to what was, in many ways, a negative attitude towards the Orient, he nevertheless felt the romantic call of the East and the new English interest in that region.

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(33) Southey, "Thalaba", Bk. V, 6. Poetical Works. pp. 254-255.

In Byron's view, Southey adopted only outrageous Eastern fiction. (34) To avoid this himself, he based his narrative poems on Eastern themes upon the experiences of his Mediterranean voyage of 1809-10. The Balkan Peninsula was at that time under Turkish government, and bore all the traces of Islamic culture. Although Byron's stay in that area lasted less than a year, the oriental atmosphere left an important impact on his work as a poet. Henceforth, his direct interest in the East began to develop rapidly and it soon found expression in the first two books of Childe Harold (1812), and his other oriental tales: The Giaour (1813), The Bride of Abydos (1813), The Corsair (1814) and The Siege of Corinth (1816). These romantic tales were immediate outcome of his travels in the East; but the impression he then received remained vividly fresh in his mind for many years, until he composed his masterpiece Don Juan (1819-23).

The oriental verse tales, which were among Byron's first romantic products, were written in great haste to satisfy, on the one hand, the public taste for works of this character, and, on the other, to wean the poet's thoughts from reality to the realm of imagination. These poems were responsible for his early fame. He became, during 1813 and 1814 'the grand Napoleon of the real rhyme'. (35) Speaking of their overwhelming popularity, O. Elton makes a most interesting observation:

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(34) Byron, The Works: Letters and Journals. 6 vols. ed. R.E. Prothero, (London, 1898), II, (August 28, 1813), p. 255.

(35) Samuel Chew, Byron in England: His Fame and After Fame. (London, 1924), p. 9.

'Byron's lot among English poets has been to include in his public many persons who care little for other poetry than his, or even, as some may add, for poetry at all.' (36) If this is so, then the fact may well be partly explained by the English public's fascination for literature containing oriental elements. Another significant aspect is that in these early oriental romances, we meet with the true Byronic hero, first faintly outlined in Childe Harold and later developed in The Corsair. In these poems he figures under many names, his costume is varied and so is his religion, but amid all his disguises, he retains the same essentials of personality and speaks the same language.

A traveller himself, and intimate with other travellers and travel accounts, Byron caught the precise spirit of his countrymen in the East. Revealing the romantic aspects of that region, he provided his reading public with the best possible substitute for actually seeing the scenes themselves. The accuracy of his descriptions of Greece is shown in the comments of Moore in his Life of Byron:

> On comparing this description, which is itself sufficiently striking (Hobhouse's Ali Pasha's court at Tepellene), with those which Lord Byron has given of the same scene, both in the letter to his mother and in the second Canto of Childe Harold, we gain some insight into the process by which imagination elevates, without falsifying, reality, and facts become brightened and refined into poetry. (37)

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(36) Elton, A Survey .... . (1780-1830), II, p. 145.

(37) Thomas Moore, Letters and Journals of Lord Byron, with Notices of his Life. 2 vols. (London, 1830), I, p. 292.

This appears to have been the prevailing opinion in England at that time: that Byron's pictures of Greece were basically true to life, and had only been touched up, not fictionalized, by the poetic imagination. In the whole of the second Canto of Childe Harold, Byron is concerned with his first visit to Greece (1809-11), which was made in the company of Hobhouse. The first fifteen stanzas form a kind of prologue where the poet views the ruins of Greece and the activity of her despoilers:

> Dull is the eye that will not weep to see
> Thy walls defaced, thy mouldering shrines removed
> By British hands, which it had best behoved
> To guard those relics ne'er to be restored.
> Curst be the hour when from their isle they roved,
> And once again thy hapless bosom gored,
> And snatch'd thy shrinking Gods to northern climes abhorr'd. (38)

The next twenty stanzas deals with the hero's travels from Spain through the Mediterranean to the coast of Albania, with comments on his love for holding 'converse with Nature's charms.' From here to stanzas LXXIII Byron dwells on various aspects of their trip through Albania, always being specific in describing the country and people of Albania. The remainder of Canto II is devoted to the rest of Greece, mainly to Athens and its environs. Here the poet turns from treatment of detail to a broader, more impassioned presentation of modern Greece. Whatever the nature of Byron's sympathy ~~is not so much with the modern Greeks~~ for the Greek people of his own time, (whom he ~~did not then~~ sometimes suspected were scarcely ~~think~~ capable of throwing off their Turkish yoke) it is his undying enthusiasm for ~~as with~~ the glory and freedom of their great ancestors which invariably inspires his espousal of the Greek cause:

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(38) Byron, "Childe Harold", II, 15. Poetical Works. p. 197.

Where'er we tread 'tis haunted, holy ground;
No earth of thine is lost in vulgar mould,
But one vast realm of wonder spreads around,
And all the Muse's tales seem truly told,
Till the sense aches with gazing to behold
The scenes our earliest dreams have dwelt upon;
Each hill and dale, each deepening glen and wold
Defies the power which crush'd thy temples gone:
Age shakes Athena's tower, but spares gray Marathon. (39)

Such was the effect on Byron of his idea of Greece which, deepened and steadied by passing time, flared up later in the best of his work. It finally led him back to Greece and his death in 1824.

After the second Canto of Childe Harold, Byron's next important statement on Greece is contained in a fragment of The Giaour. The fragment comprises the first 167 lines and the subject is Greece in her fallen state. Byron here gives a significant indication of his attitude towards ancient Greek life which he admired so much:

Clime of the unforgotten brave!
Whose land from plain to mountain-cave
Was Freedom's home or Glory's grave!
Shrine of the mighty! can it be,
That this is all remains of thee?
Approach, thou craven crouching slave:
Say, is not this Thermopylae?
These waters blue that round you lave,
Oh servile offspring of the free,
Pronounce what sea, what shore is this?
The gulf, the rock of Salamis!
These scenes, their story not unknown,
Arise, and make again your own;
Snatch from the ashes of your sires
The embers of their former fires;
And he who in the strife expires
Will add to theirs a name of fear
That Tyranny shall quake to hear,
And leave his sons a hope, a fame,
They too will rather die than shame:

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(39) Byron, "Childe Harold", II, 88. Poetical Works. p. 208.

For Freedom's battle once begun,
Bequeath'd by bleeding Sire to Son,
Though baffled oft is ever won.
Bear witness, Greece, thy living page!
Attest it many a deathless age!
While kings, in dusty darkness hid,
Have left a nameless pyramid,
They heroes, though the general doom
Hath swept the column from their tomb,
A mightier monument command,
The mountains of their native land!
There points thy Muse to stranger's eye
The graves of those that cannot die! (40)

From The Giaour we may pass to Byron's third narrative poem, The Corsair (1814) where Greece figures prominently in the opening lines of the third Canto. The first 54 lines are a beautiful description of sun-set in Southern Greece, the beginning of which is well known:

Slow sinks, more lovely ere his race be run,
Along Morea's hills the setting sun;
Not, as in Northern climes, obscurely bright,
But one unclouded blaze of living light! ...(41)

The Siege of Corinth, probably written in 1815, is the story of a dramatic struggle between Venice and Turkey for the possession of Greece. It is told in the racy style of the other verse narratives by Byron, which appeared about the time, and contains a notable tribute to Mount Parnassus as the symbol of Greek freedom:

Behind, the camp - before him lay,
In many a winding creek and bay,
Lepanto's gulf; and, on the brow
Of Delphi's hill, unshaken snow,
High and eternal, such as shone
Through thousand summers brightly gone,
Along the gulf, the mount, the clime;
It will not melt, like man, to time:

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(40) Byron, "The Giaour". Poetical Works. p. 253-254, Lines: 103-135.

(41) Byron, "The Corsair", III, Poetical Works. p. 293. Lines: 1-4 ff.

Tyrant and slave are swept away,
Less form'd to wear before the ray;
But that white veil, the lightest, frailest,
Which on the mighty mount thou hailest,
While tower and tree are torn and rent,
Shines o'er its craggy battlement;
In form a peak, in height a cloud,
In texture like a hovering shroud,
Thus high by parting Freedom spread,
As from her fond abode she fled,
And linger'd on the spot, where long
Her prophet spirit spake in song. (42)

E.H. Coleridge suggests that this is not a poetical expansion of a chapter in history, but a heightened reminiscence of local tradition, since much of the material appears to have been gathered on the spot. (43)

Throughout the 'Turkish Tales,' Byron's use of first hand information is abundantly apparent, and his numerous footnotes bear out the same conclusion. Thus, when he describes the departure of Conrad to his boat, in The Corsair, he uses the expression:

Flash'd the dipt oars, and sparkling with the stroke,
Around the waves' phosphoric brightness broke; (44)

Then in a footnote he remarks: 'By night, particularly in a warm latitude, every stroke of the oar, every motion of the boat or ship, is followed by a slight flash like sheet lightning from the water.' (45) There are many other similar examples in these poems of Byron's keen observation and retentive memory; yet all this material is made satisfactorily subservient to the general poetic effect at which Byron is aiming. It is significant that

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(42) Byron, "The Siege of Corinth", XIV. Poetical Works. p. 323. Lines: 362-381.

(43) The Works of Byron. ed. E.H. Coleridge, III, p. 44.

(44) Byron, "The Corsair", I, XVII, Poetical Works. p. 285. Lines: 571-572.

(45) Byron, Poetical Works. p. 898.

many of Byron's important contemporary critics wholly agreed with this view. According to George Ellis in the Quarterly Review, Byron actually improved on the realism of the travel books, which often provided only a 'hazy atmosphere' of the places visited:

> Byron views with a keen and searching attention, even the most common and trivial objects that he describes, and surprises us by detecting what had escaped the observation of all former spectators ... Of the brilliant skies and variegated landscapes of Greece every one has formed to himself a general notion, from having contemplated them through the hazy atmosphere of some prose narration; but, in Lord Byron's poetry, every image is distinct and glowing, as if it were illuminated by its native sunshine; and in the figures which people the landscape we behold, not only the general form and costume, but the conntenance and the attitude, and the play of features and of gesture accompanying, and indicating, the sudden impulses of momentary feelings. (46)

Thus, Byron re-emphasized and made more enchanting the prospect of the East for readers who were already acquainted with it through the popular travel books, and this prospect was not made enchanting by being fictionalized; it was distant and strange enough to need only a clear-cut realistic treatment to become highly romantic in the eyes of English readers at home.

Byron's abiding interest in the East also appears in his last and probably greatest work, Don Juan. Half the scenes and actions are laid somewhere in the East and in the third Canto we read the famous lyric:

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(46) George Ellis, Quarterly Review. (London, 1814), XI, July, p. 455.

> The isles of Greece, the isles of Greece!
> Where burning Sappho loved and sung,
> Where grew the arts of war and peace,
> Where Delos rose, and phoebus sprung!
> Eternal summer gilds them yet,
> But all, except their sun, is set ... (47)

Cantos V and VI describe the slave market and the Sultan's Harem into which Juan is smuggled, disguised as a woman, to be the lover of Sultana. He is discovered, but escapes with his life. In describing the harem, Byron shows his detailed knowledge of Turkish architecture:

> It was indeed a wide extensive building
> Which open'd on their view, and o'er the front
> There seem'd to be besprent a deal of gilding
> And various hues, as is the Turkish wont, -
> A gaudy taste, for they are little skill'd in
> The arts of which these lands were once the font:
> Each villa on the Bosphorus looks a screen
> New painted, or a pretty opera-scene. (48)

And Juan's feminine costume, modelled on the latest Turkish fashion, is described as follows:

> And then he swore; and sighing, on he slipp'd
> A pair of trousers of flesh-colour'd silk;
> Next with a virgin zone he was equipp'd,
> Which girt a slight chemise as white as milk;
> But tugging on his petticoat, he tripp'd,
> Which - as we say - or as the Scotch say, whilk... (49)

In much of the minute detail about the customs and appearance and manners Byron treats the Eastern character in this poem just as he treated the real people of that region whom he described in Childe Harold; and the general handling of both characters and settings in Don Juan is as realistic as that of the 'Turkish Tales.'

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(47) Byron, "Don Juan", III, between LXXXVI and LXXXVII. Poetical Works. pp. 695-696.

(48) Ibid. V. XLVI. Poetical Works. p. 717.

(49) Ibid. V. LXXVII. Poetical Works. p. 720.

Byron was not content with the experiences of his travels only. Many of the notes attached to the poems show that Byron drew these 'supplementary documentations' from the works of D'herbelot, Richardson, Jones and the notes on Vathek. (50) An example of Byron's use of this kind of oriental material can be seen in the following passage. When Sultan Muhammad Fatih entered in triumph the palace of Byzantine emperors in Constantinople and saw its desolate state, he composed this Persian distich:

> The spider holds the veil in the palace of Caesar
> The owl stands sentinel on the watch-tower of Afrasiab. (51)

It is likely that Byron came across this line in Jones's Grammar, (52) and ~~reproduced the same poem in~~ adapted it for in The Giaour, for in the description of the state of Hassan's palace:

> The lonely spider's thin gray pall
> Waves slowly widening o'er the wall;
> The bat builds in his Harem bower,
> And in the fortress of his power
> The owl usurps the beacon-tower. (53)

Byron's version is, of course, fuller both in his more extended account of the spider's web, and in his introduction of the bat. It is also noticeable that he uses a triptych here to give additional emphasis. Most of the poem is in rhyming couplets, but certain passages are accentuated in this way.

Byron knew the Persian poets Hafiz, Sadi, and Ferdawsi, and making a list of the world's most famous books in his Journal in 1807, he wrote a few lines describing the characteristics of the works of these three. (54)

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(50) Harold S. Weiner, "Byron and the East: Literary Sources of the 'Turkish Tales'", Nineteen Century Studies. (New York, 1940), p. 89.

(51) It is likely that Byron read this Persian distich in: Demetrius Cantemir, The History of the Growth and Decay of the Ottoman Empire. trans. N. Tindel, (London, 1734), p. 16.
cf. Weiner, "Byron and the East", p. 91.

(52) Jones, The Works. (1807), V, p. 289.

(53) Byron, "The Giaour", Poetical Works. p. 255. Lines: 290-294.

(54) Moore, Letters and Journals of Lord Byron ... I, p. 100.

He was more familiar with Hafiz than the others, and in Childe Harold

Hafiz is put beside Anacreon:

> Love conquers age - so Hafiz hath averr'd
> So sings the Teian, and he sings in sooth. (55)

The opening stanza of "A Persian Song of Hafiz", which had already

appeared in Jones's celebrated translation, is a likely source for these

lines in The "Bride of Abydos":

> I would not wrong the slenderest hair
> That clusters around thy forehead fair,
> For all the treasures buried far
> Within the caves of Istakar. (56)

Thus, Byron put his reading and travels to good use. He increased the

oriental colouring of his tales by making use of Eastern myths, super-

sititions, legends and similes. By comparing the dark eyes of the beloved

with those of a 'gazelle' or, referring to the tale of 'Mejnour's love and

'Sadi's' song, and the attachment of 'bulbul' to the 'rose', (57) and

other Eastern themes, he intensified the oriental and romantic atmosphere

of his tales. Byron's main contribution in the field of orientalism was his

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(55) Byron, "Childe Harold", II, LXIII. Poetical Works. p. 203.

(56) Byron, "The Bride of Abydos", I, Poetical Works. p. 268.
Lines: 355-358.

(57) Her eye's dark charm 'twere vain to tell,
But gaze on that of the Gazelle. "Glaour,373-374."

There linger'd we, beguiled too long -
With Mejnoun's tale, or Sadi's song;
"The Bride, I,III, 71-72."

This rose to calm my brother's cares
A message from the Bulbul bears;
"The Bride, I,X, 287-288."

share in popularizing oriental literature in his time.

Byron also wrote a parody of "A Persian Song" called "Barmaid", but it was never published, and apparently is now lost. (58) Anyhow, he successfully imitated the "Song" in one of his best lyrics:

> Remind me not, remind me not,
> Of those beloved, those vanish'd hours,
> When all my soul was given to thee;
> Hours that may never be forgot,
> Till time unnerves our vital powers,
> And thou and I shall cease to be. (59)

Moore, along with Byron and Southey, ranks as one of the three English poets most intersted in the East in the early nineteenth century. Like Southey, his knowledge of the Orient was gained almost entirely from books. Moore announced his intention of writing oriental poems in 1811, long after Southey's Thalaba, but while Byron was still engaged on the first two cantos of Childe Harold. In September of that year, Moore wrote to Mary Godfrey:

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(58) Byron, Letters and Journals. ed. E.H. Coleridge, I, p. 27, n. 1.

(59) Byron, "Remind Me Not, Remind Me Not", Poetical Works. p. 55. Lines: 1-6.

I shall now take to my poem and do something, I hope that will place me above the vulgar herd both of worldlings and critics; but you shall hear from me again when I get among the maids of Cashmere, the sparkling spring of Rochabad, and the fragrant banquets of the Peris. (60)

The poem Lalla Rookh appeared six years later in 1817, and quickly received widespread popular acclaim. Moore says that he did not intend to write about an oriental subject but to express essentially Western themes, in an oriental form and setting. The dominant theme is tolerance, and two of the four poems which make up Lalla Rookh, "The Veiled Prophet of Khorassan" and "The Fire Worshippers", are about the conflict between liberty and tyranny.

After a series of disheartening attempts to present these European ideas in an oriental form, Moore finally decided to base the poem on the fierce and long struggle between the Gheners, the ancient Fire Worshippers of Persia, and their haughty Muslim rulers. He used the story of their conflict as a way of dramatising the issue of tolerance, which became the main themse of the poems.

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(60) Thomas Moore, The Memoirs, Journals and Correspondence of Thomas Moore. 8 vols. ed. John Russell, (London, 1853-56), VIII, pp. 92-93.

In its form, Lalla Rookh is an imitation of the well-known 'frame tale' in which a series of tales in verse are loosely held together by a framework of prose. This framework tells the story of the journey of a beautiful princess, Lalla Rookh, on her way to meet her future husband, the Prince of Bucharia. On the way from Delhi to Kashmir, the Princess and her entourage are entertained by four narrative poems recited by a Persian poet, Faramorz, with whom she falls in love. At the end of the story, this young and handsome poet turns out to be her intended husband in disguise.

Lalla Rookh draws considerably on Moore's wide reading of Eastern sources. He begins with an episode from The History of Hindostan, (61) and apparently takes the name of the poem from a story in Bahar Danush. (62) 'Lalla Rookh', which means 'tulip cheek' is also used as an adjective in the odes of Hafiz. (63) Commenting on this aspect of the composition of Lalla Rookh many years later, Moore wrote:

> I took the whole range of all such Oriental reading as was accessible to me; and became, for the time, indeed, far more conversant with all relating to that distant region, than I have ever been with the scenery, productions, or modes of life of any of those countries lying most within my reach. (64)

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(61) Alexander Dow, The History of Hindostan. vols. (London, 1772), III, p. 392.

(62) Inayat Allah, Bahar-Danush. 3 vols. trans. Jonathan Scott, (Shrewsbury, 1799), III, p. 298.

(63) William Ouseley, The Oriental Collections. 3 vols. (London, 1797-99), I, pp. 208-209.

(64) Thomas Moore, The Poetical Works. 10 vols. (London, 1840-41), VI, p. 10.

The way in which Moore uses his source materials in Lalla Rookh can be illustrated by the following example. There is a passage in "The Fire Worshippers" which develops the theme of love versus patriotism, whilst at the same time, Hinda's position is becoming increasingly precarious:

> Blest Alla! who shall save her now?
> There's not in all that warrior band
> One Arab sword, one turban'd brow
> From her own Faithful Moslem land.
> Their garb - the leathern belt that wraps
> Each yellow vest - that rebel hue -
> The Tartar fleece upon their caps -
> Yes - yes - her fears are all too true,
> And Heaven hath, in this dreadful hour,
> Abandon'd her to Hafed's power ... (65)

In a series of footnotes to this passage, Moore explains some of the images used. He quotes from D'Herbelot's Bibliothèque Orientale to explain the reference to the 'leather belt', which was worn by the Chebers, the Persian fire-worshippers, as a distinctive mark of their race. Moore also quotes from Thevenot's travel books to indicate the source of the 'yellow vest, that rebel hue'; and he illustrates 'The Tartar fleece upon their caps' by quoting from Waring's Tour to Sheeraz. (66) This procedure is characteristic of Lallah Rookh. The references to Eastern sources are used to verify or illustrate points in the poem, relating to, for instance, its descriptions of scenery and local customs.

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(65) Moore, Poetical Works. VI, p. 228.

(66) Ibid. p. 228.

The first poem in the book, "The Veiled Prophet of Khorassan", is set in the ninth century. A beautiful woman, Zelica, is made half-demented by the loss of her lover, Azim, who is presumed dead. Through the promise of admission to Paradise, she is lured into the harem of al-Mokanna, who resisted Arab rule and claimed to be a prophet. Returning from the wars, Azim finds that Zelica has married al-Mokanna. He therefore decides to join the Army of the Caliph sent to punish al-Mokanna for blasphemy. He is defeated, throws himself into a vat of poison and dies. Zelica is broken-hearted, and being mistaken for al-Mokanna, because she has covered her face with his veil, is killed by Azim and dies in his arms:

> "I meant not, Azim," soothing she said,
> As on his trembling arm she lean'd her head,
> And, looking in his face, saw anguish there
> Beyond all wounds the quivering flesh can bear
> "I meant not <u>thou</u> shouldst have the pain of this;
> "Though death, with thee thus tasted,. is a bliss
> "Thou wouldst not rob me of, didst thou but know,
> "How oft I've pray'd to God I might die so ..." (67)

The story is set in a period of Persian history when numerous nationalistic political movements appeared under the guise of religious sects, and were accused of blasphemy. Moore depicts Mokanna as a demonic figure whose deformed face makes him hate mankind. The satanic trait in his character and the 'horror' aspect of the story belong to the Gothic tradition.

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(67) Moore, <u>Poetical Works</u>. VI, pp. 139-140.

The second poem, "Paradise and the Peri", has as its subject a beautiful sprite who lives on perfume, and who tries to get into Paradise by bringing to the gate a gift that will be regarded as valuable there. First of all she brings a drop of the blood of a young Indian warrior who dies to free his country from a tyrant. However, this fails to open the gate. Then she brings the sigh of an Egyptian maiden as she dies of grief over the loss of her plague-stricken lover, but this does not work either. Finally, she presents the tear of a repentant sinner who has achieved forgiveness through the prayer of a child, and this is successful in opening the gate:

> Joy, joy for ever'. my task is done
> The gates are pass'd. and Heaven is won'.
> Oh'. am I not happy? I am, I am ... (68)

The third poem is "The Fire Worshippers". A young gheber, Hafed, falls in love with Hinda, the beautiful daughter of the Muslim Emir Al-Hassan who has been sent from Arabia to quell the resistance of the fire worshippers, who are opposing Islam. Hafed, the young Byronic hero, is given the qualities of deep restrained passion, high courage, and a certain fatalistic view of life, which at that time were associated with the oriental character. Thus he speaks of his hopeless love for Hinda, the daughter of his sworn enemy:

> "If aught on earth could charm or force
> "My spirit from its destin'd course, -
> "If aught could make this soul forget
> "The bond to which its seal is set,
> "'Twould be those eyes; - they, only they,
> "Could melt that sacred seal away'.

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(68) Moore, Poetical Works. VI, p. 184.

"But no - 'tis fix'd - my awful doom
"Is fix'd - on his side of the tomb
"We meet no more; - why, why did Heaven
"Mingle two souls that earth has riven,
"Has rent asunder wide as ours?
"Oh, Arab maid, as soon the Powers
"Of Light and Darkness may combine,
"As I be link'd with thee or thine!." (69)

Hinda is captured by the ghebers and discovers that her lover is their chief. When the ghebers are betrayed to the Arab ruler Al-Hassan, Hafed commits suicide by throwing himself on the funeral pyre. Hinda leaps from the boat in which she is being carried back to her father, and drowns.

This is probably the most powerful poem in the book, expressing Moore's Irish nationalism by comparing the struggles of the Irish against the English to that of the Persians against their Arab invaders. Byron expressed his view that this was what the poem was about when he dedicated his Corsair to Moore:

> Your imagination will create a warmer sun, and less clouded sky; but wildness, tenderness, and originality, are part of your national claim of oriental descent, to which you have already thus far proved your title more clearly than the most zealous of your country's antiquarians. (70)

The last poem in the book "The Light of Haram", is a collection of songs. It is set in Cashmir where Selim, son of the Great Akbar, who has quarrelled with his favourite spouse, is magically reconciled with her. Many of the songs contain delightful descriptions of the Festival of Roses:

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(69) Moore, Poetical Works. VI, p. 219.

(70) Byron, Poetical Works. p. 277.

> The Valley holds its Feast of Roses;
> The joyous Time, when pleasures pour
> Profusely round and, in their shower,
> Hearts open, like the Season's Rose,
> The Flow'ret of a hundreed leaves,
> Expanding while the dew-fall flows,
> And every leaf its balm receives. (71)

In the narrative which links the four poems and also concludes the book, Moore describes in colourful language the splendour of the Indian cavalcade escorting Lalla Rookh, and the beauties of 'Cashmere' which lies on their way. Here Chamberlain of Haram, called Fadldeen, is introduced whom Moore with a mocking wit, uses as a mouthpiece to make comical comments on his own poetry:

> Upon the whole, it was his opinion, from the specimens which they had heard, and which, he begged to say, were the most tiresome part of the journey, that, whatever other merits this well-dressed gentleman might possess, poetry was by no means his proper avocation: "and indeed," concluded the critic, "from his fondness for flowers and for birds, I would venture to suggest that a florist or a bird-catcher" is a much more suitable calling for him than a poet. (72)

It took Moore several years to collect material for the book. His list of sources for Lalla Rookh includes almost all the writings on the Middle East published up to that time. He drew on stories, accounts of travels, works by oriental scholars, translations from Asiatic (mostly Persian) poetry, geography and history. All this gives an exotic flavour to the poems, as, for example, when after reading about the love of Potiphar's wife for Joseph in the poems of Hafiz and Jamiz he writes:

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(71) Moore, Poetical Works. VII, p. 14.

(72) Ibid. pp. 57-58.

> Here fond Zuleikha woos with open arms
> The Hebrew boy, who flies from young charms,
> Yet, flying, turns to gaze, and half undone,
> Wishes that Heav'n and she could both be won. (73)

Joseph Champion's translation of the Shah-Nameh was one of the books used by Moore, and he refers to it several times. In "The Fire Worshippers", when Hafed climbs up the mountain to meet Hinda, the romantic legend of the fair-haired Zal and his mistress Rodahver (sic) is borrowed from the work of Firdausi:

> Like her to whom, at dead of night,
> The bridegroom, with his locks of light,
> Came, in the flush of love and pride,
> And scal'd the terrace of his bride;
> When, as she saw him rashly spring,
> And midway up in danger cling,
> She flung him down her long dark hair,
> Exclaiming, breathless, "There, love, there!" (74)

The Persian elements in Lalla Rookh helped to make it very popular and not least in Persia. Moore was flattered to hear that some parts had been translated into Persian, and that its songs were being sung in Persia. The Persians could not believe that the whole work had not been taken originally from some Persian manuscript. This caused Henry Luttrel to celebrate Moore's success in the following epigram:

> I am told, dear Moore, your lays are sung,
> (Can it be true you lucky man?)
> By moonlight, in the Persian tongue,
> Along the streets of Ispahan. (75)

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(73) Moore, Poetical Works. VI, p. 85.

(74) Ibid. p. 213.

(75) Ibid. p. xxi.

See also: Herbert O Mackay, The Life of Thomas Moore. (Dublin, 1951), p. 24.

There were a great many favourable reviews of the poem in newspapers and magazines of the time. They range from the Monthly Magazine's extravagant eulogy of the author, 'Now we hail the rising of a sun which will never set' (76), to Blackwood's assertion that everything in the book is completely and genuinely oriental. (77) In between are numerous favourable comments on the poem's intensity of feeling, imagery, and description of character. This shows the importance of Lalla Rookh as one of the most popular of the works that conjured up an oriental atmosphere for an English audience.

The outstanding success of Lalla Rookh represents the fashion of the highly romantic oriental poetry at its highest, immediately before the tide began to ebb. Its popularity may be taken as clear indication of the widespread interest in, and knowledge of the Orient in our period. In Moore's poetry we reach the climax of poetical Orientalism while the climax in prose fiction came at about the same time with the publication of that remarkable picaresque novel of oriental life, Hajji-Baba. Through this, as will be shown in the next section of this chapter, Persia was brought closer to Englishmen and made a remarkable impact on the development of Orientalism.

In the first eventful years of the nineteenth century Napoleonic ambitions in the East made contact with Persia a matter of urgent concern

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(76) Monthly Magazine. XLVII (1817), p. 450.

(77) Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine. I, (1817), p. 280.

to England. By 1801 England was seriously alarmed about India. Napoleon was planning to march to India through Persia. Soon the British agents were rushing to the court of Fath Ali Shah. This political interest was not without cultural effect. Numerous travellers published their journals after returning from Persia, and offered them to a public anxious about the East. Thus the British interest in Persia found expression in travel books and in the novels which were based on them.

With regard to travel novels, it will be sufficient for our purpose to examine one typical novel, Hajji Baba, which is about Persia at this period. This novel was written by a veteran traveller in the East, and it combines to an unusual degree realistic descriptions of the people and appearance of this region with the picturesque adventures of one of its most colourful natives. As the main emphasis in this novel is on the amazing adventures of Hajji Bara, and the author was anxious to present a true picture of Persian life without any western modifications, few English opinions about the people or scenery of this region appear in this book. Thus, the reader does not find, to any marked degree, any interest in the dominant ideas or themes which characterized the travel books. The author simply concentrates on the story and the actual picture of Persia which he wishes to present, and he allows nothing to distract him from this purpose. The result, in this case, is an extremely interesting and successful novel.

James Morier was the son of the Consul-General of the Levant Company in Constantinople. Although he was English and educated in England, he was born in the East, at Smyrna in 1780, and in 1807 joined

his father in Constantinople. He entered the diplomatic service the same year, going to Persia as the private secretary of Sir Harford Brydges, the British envoy. After a stay of eight months he was sent back to Constantinople, but three years later he was appointed secretary to Sir Gore Ouseley, ambassador to the Court of Tehran. He later became British chargé d'affaires until 1815, when he returned to England.

Morier brought back with him vivid memories of the East and was able to turn these into prose, initially in the form of records of his travels and experiences. These achieved moderate fame, but much more successful was his novel, Hajji Baba, which was published anonymously in 1824, claiming to be a translation from Persian. When the book was translated into Persian, many Persians who read it believed that it really had a Persian original.

The book presents the readers with a cross-section of Persian society. It begins with an introductory letter, more elaborate than most such introductions. The scene in which the traveller by chance meets an old Persian friend, lying sick in a town on the border between Turkey and Persia, the minute description of the Carvanserai, and of the meal he was starting when he was called to see the sick man, all tend to give the whole account an atmosphere of reality.

Morier records a conversation with Dr. Fundgruben, Chaplain to the Swedish Embassy at the Porte, held sixteen years before the publication of the book: 'I have ever borne in mind a conversation, when one beautiful moonlight night, reclining upon a sofa of the Swedish palace, and looking out of those windows which so magnificent and extensive a view of the city

and harbour of Constantinople ...' (78) The two men discussed the possibility of depicting the lives of orientals in a work that would improve on The Arabian Nights in one aspect: rather than assuming the reader was already familiar with the novel's background, it would provide the necessary information, but unobtrusively, so as not to destroy the impression that the book was authentic.

Morier reminded the Chaplain that he had said that no European could ever transcend the barriers of nationality so effectively as to be able to give a really accurate portrait of oriental manners and psychology. They agreed that the only way something like this could be done would be for an Oriental who had lived long enough both in the Orient and amongst Europeans (so as to gain an understanding of what would interest them) to write his own autobiography. At the end of the discussion, Morier suggested that:

> if, an European would give a correct idea of Oriental manners, which would comprehend an account of the vicissitudes attendant upon the life of an Eastern, of his feelings about his government, of his conduct in domestic life, of his hopes, ... of everything that is connected both with the operations of the mind and those of the body, perhaps the best method would be to collect so many facts and anecdotes of actual life as would illustrate the different stations and ranks which compose a Mussalman community, and then work them into one connected narrative upon the plan of that excellent picture of European life, Gil Blas' of Le Sage. (79)

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(78) Johannes Kolmodin, "The Rev. Dr. Fundgruben", Le Monde Oriental. (Uppsala, 1931), XXV, pp. 67-80.

(79) James Morier, The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan. (London, 1835), 'Introductory Epistle', p. VII.

This passage summarises both the aims and plan of the novel. By expressing the experiences of his travels in Persia in the form of a picaresque novel, Morier aimed at creating a vivid satirical picture of Persian society. As well as Gil Blas, which he refers to as his model, a book by Thomas Hope, was also an important influence on the writing of Hajji Baba: Anastasius, or Memoirs of a Greek (1819).

Thomas Hope was a wealthy Englishman who had travelled extensively in the East in his youth, and drew on his experiences there in the writing of Anastasius. The book was very popular. Byron said that it made him weep for two reasons, first, 'because he had not written it, second because Hope had.' (80)

The book begins with its main character, Anastasius, seducing the daughter of the French consul on the island of Scio. He later runs away to sea, where he is captured by a pirate ship, and by one of the Turkish men-of-war. He is made chief assistant to Mavroyeni, who is the Greek droguman of Hassan, the notorious commander-in-chief of the Turkish navy. This job does not last long, because Anastasius accidently incurs the dislike of his employer's wife. He is eventually told to leave, and lives riotously for a time with friends who help to spend his money. Penniless, he looks around for some way to support himself. He gets a job helping a Jewish quack doctor to sell patent medicines in the street. The claims made for the medicines are found to be fraudulent, and so Anastasius is put in jail, where he meets a mountain chieftain, Mackari.

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(80) Frank Wadleigh Chandler, The Literature of Roguery. 2 vols. (London, 1907), II, p. 350.

Mackari is from the peninsula of Mayno, but becomes a pirate, is captured, and sold into slavery. He is very much a Byronic hero, with tremendous courage and concern for his companions: 'Of every new hardship with which they were threatened, he uniformly stood forward to court the preference; and, while his fortitude awed into silence the useless complaints of his troop, his self-devotion still relieved its real misery'. (81)

Anastasius's closest friend in prison is a young Greek dancer, Anagnosti, and they become blood brothers by going through a solemn ceremony in the presence of a Greek priest. When he is discharged from prison, he promptly forgets Anagnosti. Shortly afterwards, Anastasius turns Mohammetan, and meeting Anagnosti a year later, is chided by him for faithlessness. In the argument that follows, Anastasius accidently kills his friend, and he feels remorse for many years afterwards.

Anastasius eventually leaves Constantinople and sets out for Egypt, where he raises to an important position and marries the daughter of the ruling Mamluke. But his fortunes are reversed again by one of the rebellions of the Mamlukes and the death of his wife. He moves on again to Arabia, and then Smyrna, where he seduces the daughter of a well-known merchant and leaves her. She finally dies giving birth to his son, and Anastasius is again filled with remorse at his treatment of her. His son is brought up by foster parents in Cairo, but he steals him from them, and decides to arrange for the child to be educated in Italy. However,

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(81) Thomas Hope, Anastasius, or Memoirs of a Greek. 3 vols. (London, 1836), I, p. 87.

whilst on the way there, the boy dies of a fever. Anastasius, deprived of everything that could make life worthwhile, ill and despairing, dictates his memoirs and dies.

It is obvious that the story is often highly melodramatic and improbable. What gives the book its value is the wealth of realistic description it contains. The setting is convincing even if the adventures of the hero are not. Anastasius contains a great deal of historical and geographical detail about the East, as well as analysis of Eastern personalities, including self-analysis by the hero. The work is both a novel and a travel book: it became an important document for the early nineteenth century English reader interested in the East. It would appear ~~We cannot tell~~ that ~~whether~~ Morier was inspired by the example of Anastasius to adopt the picaresque form for his purpose,

Although Anastasius is realistic in its description of customs and characters, however, Morier's Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan is the story of the East par excellence. Morier not only presents each detail accurately, but his very mode of thinking, his imagination, and his style of writing are completely Persian too. While Hope writes in a style that is still very English, Morier uses forms of expression so simple that they would be common to any language, and adds to this allusions to Persian poets and sages.

For example, Morier tells the story of The Shah honouring his doctor with a visit to his house. The royal servants, tent pitchers, cooks, etc., arrive beforehand and upset the doctor by the way they treat his

property. A cook answers his complaints with the poem of Sadi:

> If from the peasant's tree, the king an apple craves,
> Down with the root and branch, exclaim his ready slaves;
> And should he, in dainty mood, one single egg require,
> Lo! thousand spitted birds revolve before the fire. (82)

Hajji Baba is involved in a bewildering number of adventures, coming into contact with all kinds of people, from Turkman bandits to court poets. He does not, however, jump from one experience to the next. The story line usually presents a very plausible reason for his moving from one place or job to another, and for the adventures which follow. His moves often result from the discovery of his misdeeds. He moves on and tries to mend his ways, but eventually gets into trouble again, and is once more forced to move on.

When the author wished to bring in aspects of Persian society which did not fit in with the story of the hero, he devised stories within the main story. For example, Hajji would meet someone who, in talking about his life, would give an account of a section of Persian society of which Hajji himself was never a part. At one point, Morier introduces a character called Zeenab, a Kurdish slave, who describes life inside a grandee's harem. She tells him of her mistress, the Khanum, who was once one of the Shah's favourites, but is now disapproved of, and is ordered to marry the doctor: ' ... and she therefore holds her present husband as cheap as the dust under her feet, and keeps him in a most pitiful state of subjection. He dares not sit down before her, unless she permits him, which she very seldom does; and she is moreover so jealous, that there is no slave in her harem who does not excite her suspicions.' (83)

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(82) James Morier, The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan. (London, 1925), p. 122.

(83) Morier, The Adventures of Hajji Baba. p. 97.

To explain to her new friend her own position in the harem, Zeenab gives a detailed account of the occupation of every slave:

> We are five in the harem, besides our mistress ... there is Shireen, the Georgian slave ~~girl~~; then Nûr Jehan, the Ethiopian slave-girl; Fatmeh, the cook; and old Leilah, the duenna. My situation is that of hand-maid to Khanum, so my mistress is called. I attend her pipe, I hand her her coffee, bring in the meals, go with her to the bath, dress and undress her, make her clothes, spread, sift, and pound tobacco, and stand before her. Shireen, the Georgian, is the sandukdar, or house-keeper ..., Nûr Jehan, the black slave, acts as ferash, or carpet spreader: she does all the dirty work ... Old Leilah is a sort of duenna over the young slaves: she is employed in the out-of-door service ... and is also supposed to be a spy upon the actions of the doctor. (84)

In describing the beauty of her mistress, Hajji Baba indirectly informs the English reader of the Persian ideal of female beauty:

> Her hands ~~are~~ were small and dyed with Khenna; Her feet were equally small ... Her eyes were large and peculiarly black, and fringed with long lashes, which, aided by the collyrium with which they were tinged, formed a sort of ambuscade, from which she levelled her shafts. Her eyebrows were finely arched, and nature had brought them together just over her nose, in so strong a line, that there was no need of art to join them together. Her nose was aquiline, her mouth small ... and in the centre of her chin was a dimple which she had carefully marked with a blue puncture. (85)

Having failed to meet her lover when she has promised to, Zeenab excuses herself by telling him of the death of one of the ladies of the Seraglio, a sister of her mistress who was poisoned, apparently by a rival for the Shah's favour. There is a vivid account of the wake conducted by the women of the house. The mistress takes them all with her, in order to increase the clamour of lamentation. She tears her clothes:

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(84) Morier, The Adventures of Hajji Baba. pp. 97-98.

(85) Ibid. pp. 93-94.

'... an etiquette which she had performed, however, with great care, considering that she wore a favourite jacket, having permitted only one or two ~~of the~~ seams of it to be ripped open.' (86)

The absence of the other woman gives Hajji the chance to enter his master's andarun and he describes the Khanumps' own apartment. Zeenab prepares a rich meal, which is described in detail, together with the lovers' feast and song in the absence of their master and mistress. Her exultation at gaining the favour of the Shah, her departure from the doctor's house without even seeing her lover, her happiness at the wealth and pleasure awaiting her in the Shah's household, and her final tragic execution when the results of her past affair with Hajji show themselves, are all presented realistically and succinctly.

Almost every scene in the book gives detailed information about some aspect of Persian life, but this information is provided so unobtrusively that it does not in any way hinder the development of the story. Hajji describes in detail the marriage he has arranged between the Khanum, who is the widow of his dead master, the doctor, and another former master, the Turkish merchant, Osman. The precautions both he and the bride take in order to prevent the bridegroom from seeing her old face until the marriage ceremony is over, the impatience of the bridegroom in the meanwhile, and his disappointment in the end, are all dramatically and vividly described. The Hajji's final comment explains to the English reader the nature of the marriage that has just been described:

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(86) Morier, The Adventures of Hajji Baba. p. 100.

> Sorely did I fear that he would return his bargain upon her ovr hands; but when he found that it was impossible to expect anything better in a muti, a class of females, who generally were the refuse of womankind - old widows, and deserted wives; and who, rather than live under the opprobium that single life entails in our Mohammedan countries, would put up with anything that came under the denomination of husband, he agreed to take her to his home. (87)

Often a letter or a snatch of conversation is used to reveal a great deal about Persian life. The following incident is a good example. After leaving Meshed, Hajji meets a man who is carrying letters to Tehran from the court poet,Asker, whom Hajji got to know well when they were both prisoners of the Turkomans. The messenger, being curious but unable to read, shows the Hajji letters. One of them says a great deal, very briefly, about the place of women in Persia:

> I then inspected the letters addressed to his family, of which one was to his wife, another to his son's tutor, and third to his steward. To his wife, he talked of interior arrangements of his anderun; hoped that she had been economical in her dress, that she had kept the female slaves in good order, and desired her immediately to set herself and them about making clothes for him, as he was destitute of everything. (88)

Another aspect of the book is its use of satire. Physicians, government officials and clergymen are amongst Morier's targets. The senseless and comic rivalry between the royal physician and the British Embassy doctor (guilty of introducing vaccination which had, in any case, long been practised in the Orient and Near Ea) contrasts European science with the superstitions of the East. Morier also satirises government officials. He believed that a despotic society creates tyranny at every level. 'I found myself within an energy and a vigour in driving the people about', Hajji Baba

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(87) Morier, The Adventures of Hajji Baba. p. 284.

(88) Ibid. pp. 65-66.

says when he is stationed as a guard at the city gate of Tehran during the king's passage,

> 'that I never thought appertained to my character; for I recollected well, when one of the mob, how entirely I abominated every man in office. I made use of my stick so freely upon the heads and backs of the crowd, that my brother executioners quite stared, and wondered what demon they had got amongst them.' (89)

At the same time this petty tyrant is a coward in his quick submission to those more powerful than himself, but his straightforward confession of cowardice does not give his reader any chance to accuse him of it. Nothing could be more honest than:

> I was never for facing difficulties with courage, and who would always rather as a preliminary to safety make use of the swiftness of my heels in preference to adopting any other measure ... (90)

And when Hajji gets out of any of the numerous scrapes, he with all humility attributes it to his good fortune rather than to any personal merits. His good fortune helps him to become a great authority on foreign affairs. He is employed by the Grand Vizier as a go-between him and the English mission to extract bribes and negotiate agreements and matters of ceremony. Here Morier humorously describes the rivalry between the British and the French at the Persian court. Fath Ali Shah's vanity, dishonesty, and greed are exposed. He yields to whoever is the highest bidder, which, in this case, happens to be the British. Sheikh Sadi makes this sarcastic comment about his greed for money:

> Let money appear, and every head is prostrate,
> 'Tis thus, the heaviest weight in the scales lowers the iron beam.

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(89) Morier, The Adventures of Hajji Baba. p. 144.

(90) Ibid. p. 370.

The last we see of Hajji Baba, he is strutting along the streets of the capital, preoccupied with the thought of his return to his native city, 'clothed with the Kalaat of honour, armed with the hand of power, and mounted upon the steed of splendour'. (91) The author leaves him there and turns to the readers and in the fashion of Oriental narrators:

> stops his narrative, makes his bow, and says, 'Give me encouragement and I will tell you more. You shall be informed how Hajji Baba accompanied a great ambassador to England, of their adventures by sea and land, of all he saw, and all he remarked, and of what happended to him on his return to Persia. (92)

Hajji Baba greatly influenced the image of the Persians in England. For years it was recommended as a guide book to the character of the Persians. A traveller was told: 'When you read this you will know more of Persia and Persians than you will if you had lived there with your eyes open for twenty years.' (93) Curzon, in his preface to the novel, presented it as an extact portrait of the Persians. Perhaps Browne was the only critic who pointed out that Morier lived mostly in the circle of corrupt Persian courtiers and officials, who inspired his characters. E.G. Browne concluded: 'Let not the reader then, be so far carried away by the charm of Morier's pages to lay down the book in the belief that every Persian is a Hajji Baba, a Mirza Ahmak, or a Mulla Nadan.' (94)

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(91) Morier, The Adventures of Hajji Baba. p. 384.

(92) Ibid. p. 385.

(93) Wills, In The Land of the Lion and the Sun. (London, 1883), p. 3.

(94) E.G. Browne's Introduction to:
The Adventures of Hajji Baba. (London, 1895), p. xii.

In 1828 Morier wrote a sequel to The Adventures of Hajji Baba, called The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England. The work is not a picaresque novel but a satire in the tradition of Les Lettres Persanes. (95) It should be noticed that unlike earlier works of the same kind, the satire is largely at the expense of the visitors, rather than the natives. Most of the comic passages are based on the contrasts between the manners of the Persians and English, or misunderstandings between them. Speech, table manners, and similar subjects give occasion for many amusing incidents. Most of these are light-hearted enough, but yet the novel also has its more serious aspects, and Morier's satiric attitude towards the Persians is as much in evidence as it had been in his first novel. As a typical example we might quote the advice of Mehmandar, the official British host, to Mr. Hogg, whose sister wanted to marry Hajji Baba: 'I can only say, that I would rather tie a millstone about my sister's neck, and throw her into the sea, than marry her to a Persian.' (96)

Despite Morier's uncharitable attitude towards them, his Persians are true to type. This was an improvement on earlier satires of this nature, where the foreign visitor is usually a thinly disguised European; and the reason for this was probably that Morier had some real Persian in mind. During the stay of the Persian envoy, Mirza Abul Hasan, in England (1810), Morier had been in continual contact with him and his retinue, and he plays an important part in the novel as Mirza Firouz.

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(95) Charles De Secondat Baron de Montésquieu, Lettres Persanes, (Paris, 1721)

The Persian Letters. 2 vols. trans. J. Davidson. (Philadelphia, 1896).

(96) Morier, The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Isphaham in England. p. 225.

In the London of 1810, Mirza had apparently caused quite a sensation. Thus, according to Charles Lamb, he was 'the principal thing talked of' for some time. (97) He was certainly a witty and amiable companion. Some of his repartees and anecdotes appear not only in Morier's novel but also in other contrmporary English works. Once Mirza was asked by a lady whether the Persians still worshipped the sun. He answered: 'Oh! yes, Madam, and so would you in England too, if you ever saw him.' (98) Our knowledge of this man sheds some light on the novel. Morier claims to have derived strange encouragement from a letter he received from 'one high in office in Persia', which he produced in his introduction to Hajji Baba in England:

> ... What for you to write Hajji Baba, Sir? King very angry, sir, I swear him you never writes lies; but he say, yes - write. All people very angry with you, Sir. That very bad book, Sir. All lies Sir ... Persian people very bad people, perhaps, but very good to you, Sir. What for you abuse them so bad? I very angry ... You call me Mirza Firouz, I know very well, and say I talk a great deal nonsense ... Oh, you think yourself very clever man; but this Hajji Baba very foolish business ... (99)

It is obvious that ~~both~~ this- letter~~s are~~ is an inventions of Morier. It ~~is~~ would seem hardly credible that a high Persian official would make himself the object of ridicule by writing such a letter, and asking for 'a little china and glass' in return for lying and swearing to the king on behalf of Morier.

However, there is an English letter by Mirza, which might have served as a model. While staying in London, Mirza, was asked to write his impressions of English society. He accordingly addressed a letter to

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(97) Charles Lamb, Collected Works. 6 vols. (London1876), II, p. 241.

(98) George Curzon's Introduction to:
The Adventures of Hajji Baba. (London,1895), p. xvi.

(99) James Morier, The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England. 2 vols. (London,1828), I, pp. vi-vii.

an anonymous lord, which was published in the Morning Post for 29 May 1810, and quoted in full by Stephen Weston in his account of the Persian Ambassador. (100) It is an interesting specimen of literal translation of Persian syntax into English. One extract will be enough to show the close similarity with the letters Morier supposedly received:

> I very much astonish every day, now much hot than before, evening parties much crowd than before. Pretty, beautiful ladies come sweat, that not very good - I always afraid some old lady in great crowd come dead; that not very good, and spoil my happiness. I think old ladies, after eighty-five years, not come to evening parties - that much better. Why for take so much trouble. (101)

Comparing this letter with the two letters produced by Morier, it becomes clear that he has imitated the style of Mirza. Mirza Abul Hassan described his journey to England in a work entitled The Book of Wonders of which an incomplete copy is in the British Museum (Add. MS. 23,546). Though not a particularly interesting travel book, it indicates the origins of several episodes in both parts of Hajji Baba. (102)

Most of the characters of Hajji Baba are drawn at least partly from life, and it is tempting to ask whether the character of Hajji himself might not have been suggested by a real person. M. Gail thinks that the adventurous life of Mirza Abul Hassan was the basis of Hajji Baba's story. (103) However, it is clear that Morier satirized Mirza in the person of

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(100) Stephen Weston, Persian Recreations or New Tales. (London, 1812), pp. 42-48.

(101) Ibid. p. 43.

(102) Mojtaba Minovi, Panezdah Goftar. (Tehran, 1955), pp. 269 f.

(103) Marziah Gail, Persia and The Victorians. (London, 1951), pp. 74-79.

Mirza Firouz, (104) and, although certain incidents in the life of his acquaintances, such as taking refuge in the santuary of Qom, certainly inspired some of Hajji's adventures, it seems that the resemblance goes no further than that. It seems best to let Morier himself have the last word on this:

> I beg to disclaim personality of any kind. The letter above cited (Viz., that of Mirza Abul Hassan) ... shows how easily an individual will take a character to himself, which although it may fit in some parts, yet it does not on the whole; and is no more presented as a finished portrait, then taking a nose from one person, a mouth from another, and the eye from a third, to make up a whole face, can be called the likeness of either of those who have contributed a feature.(105)

The situation of these strange characters in England creates a type of humour which was already familiar for the readers of Goldsmith. Here, instead of the foibles of Europeans being exposed by being seen through the eyes of an Asiatic, as in Citizen of the World, we have the Persians gaping in wonder at the number of looking glasses, plate and crockery in a Plymouth inn, or sitting cross-legged on the seats of a mail-coach or undressing in public to bathe in the pool in Green Park.

Sir Walter Scott seemed to share Morier's sanguine hopes concerning the healthy influence of Hajji Baba on the Persian Court. He wrote in his review of Hajji Baba in England:

> The idea of certain literary influence being exercised by the English press at the court of Ispahan would, twenty years ago, have sounded as absurd as to have affirmed that ... the report of the guns fired in Saint James's Park, was heard on the terrace of Persepolis. And yet such an

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(104) James Morier, A Journey Through Persia, Armenia ... (London, 1812), p. vii.

(105) A Second Journey Through Persia, Armenia ... (London, 1818), p. 166.

> influence to a certain extent now exists, since it appears, ... that the Persian court were interested in, and touched by the satirical account of their manners in Mr. Morier's novel, and felt that pettish sort of displeasure which, like the irritation of blister precedes sanative effects. (106)

Hajji Baba in England survived, however, mainly because is is a sequel to the ever-living Hajji Baba itself. Morier's later tales cannot stand any comparison with Hajji Baba. He wrote two travel books, (107) neither of which attained great popularity, because he seems to have believed that the travel book was not a suitable medium for the kind of racy material which enlivened his novels. He also wrote two other novels with Eastern backgrounds: in the first, Zohrab the Hostage (1832), which is about the reign of Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar, the eunuch King of Iran, Morier makes use of Sir John Malcolm's History of Persia for the historical events. In this novel he tried to compensate for all the objectionable roguery of his earlier hero by depicting a hero and heroine who are ~~not of this world~~ too good to be true. All the valour, truth and patriotism that could ever be attributed to a hero are heaped onto Zohrab, a Tartar Prince, captured by the Persians. The heroine, Anima, the Shah's niece, combined virtue and sweetness with courage and strength of character.

In another edition of Zohrab (1834), Morier found it necessary to account for so much virtue in mere Persians:

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(106) "Review of Hajji Baba in England", The Quarterly Review. (London, 1829), XXX, p. 78.

(107) James Morier, A Journey Through Persia, Armenia, Asia Minor To Constantinople, In The Years 1808 And 1809. (London, 1812).

A Second Journey Through Persia, Armenia, Asia Minor To Constantinople, Between The Years 1810 And 1816. (London, 1818).

> Although it may be urged such characters as my hero and heroine are not known in Persia, yet let me say that there is no good reason why they should not. It has been remarked that the principles which actuate them are not likely to be produced by the doctrines of the Koran; but we often see in the votaries of the false religion an excellence, however produced, which seems to be guided by the true one. (108)

He was obviously answering some criticism in the above passage. In his following oriental novel, Ayesha, The Maid of Kars (109), he tried to avoid all possible criticism of this nature by taking an Englishman for his hero. The heroine too was an English girl, long lost by a noble couple while travelling in Greece. Morier's lengthy oriental romances published after 1824, (110) besides falling outside our period, tend more towards the melodramatic and give a less lively and realistic picture of the orient than the stories of Hajji Baba both at home and in England.

In this survey of English interest in the literature and life of the Orientals, as it emerged during the period under study, a fairly clear development towards greater realism can be seen. The presentation of Oriental ways of life and manners, which had reached a remarkable degree of accuracy in the works of Byron, Southey and Thomas Moore, was brought to a still higher stage of development by the travellers, who had a first-hand knowledge of the subject. In Hajji Baba and other novels of this type the reader will find a realistic picture of the East hardly surpassed anywhere in English fiction. A further and even more significant fact

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(108) James Morier, Zohrab, The Hostage. (Paris, 1833), Preface, p. iii.

(109) James Morier, Ayesha, The Maid of Kars. 3 vols. (Paris, 1834),

(110) James Morier, An Oriental Tale. (London, 1837).
The Mirza. 3 vols. (London, 1841).
Misselmah, A Persian Tale. (Brighton, 1847).

about Hajji Baba is that its author was both a traveller and a novelist. Morier, as we have seen, spent much of his life in the East. In his case, as in the case of Byron, the distinction between traveller and man of letters disappears; and we have instead a complete fusion of the two in a work of high literary value. Thus, Morier's work, in our period, marks a climax in the prose literature about the East, just as Byron's and Moore's represent a climax in the poetry.

CONCLUSION

The main period of interest in this thesis has been the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and even more particularly, the last quarter of the eighteenth and first quarter of the nineteenth centuries. Earlier examples of oriental influence on English literature have been considered in the first chapter, but only in order to provide the necessary background for the main study. It is widely recognized that the East was a more significant influence in English literature at this time than any earlier period, a fact which helps to give the subject its interest. On the other hand, the very extent of the available evidence has made it necessary to limit the study. To this end, therefore, certain representative and significant authors and works have been chosen for discussion, one of the criteria for selection being the extent of specifically Persian influence.

The first work to be studied in detail, The Arabian Nights, appeared first in Antoine Galland's French version between the years 1703 and 1713, and there were subsequently a number of English translations. The Nights was very popular, a fact which seems to reflect a demand for literature with exotic material which would appeal to people's imaginations. At this time, the classical influence which had been predominated since the Renaissance was already beginning to wane, and The Arabian Nights points the way to the new mood which was starting to grow. On the other hand, despite this looking forward to new modes of expression, those writers influenced by The Arabian Nights still shows a characteristically eighteenth-century concern with giving moral instruction through art. These features are also apparent in Dr. Johnson's Rasselas,

which we considered in the same chapter as The Nights. Johnson treated the rather vague eastern milieu as an ideal background for the introduction of didactic material, introducing an attack on the complacent optimism of people who have themselves been fortunate in life, and also a plea against what he considered to be the dangerous sway of imagination over reason.

The next writer to be considered in detail was Sir William Jones, who was ~~very much a propagandist~~ appealing for an increased knowledge of Persian, Arabic and other eastern literatures in Europe. As with The Arabian Nights and Rasselas, Jones's work marks a departure from neo-classical ideals and is yet recognizably a product of them. In contradiction of the neo-classical hierarchy of poetic genres, which gave pride of place to the epic, Jones argued for the superiority of the lyric. He wanted to revitalise the pastoral form, and he contended that this could be done only by abandoning traditional classical mythology and imagery, and replacing them with Oriental imagery. He sought, also, to combat Aristotle's theory of imitation. However, despite these blows against neo-classicism, his own views can often be seen as deriving from it. To take the example of imitation, although Jones's strictures on Aristotle's principle include exotic supporting evidence, it is in many respects an extension of views expressed by other exponents of anti-mimetic theory, and he builds like them, upon a western classical base.

William Beckford's Vathek, which was discussed in chapter three, represents a turning point in the use which English writers made of oriental materials. In the earlier part of the eighteenth century, Orientalism inspired mainly the writing of moral tales modelled upon The Arabian Nights. With Vathek, however, the tale is more autobiographical and personal, prefiguring

the subjectivism of Romantic writers. It represents a turning point for another reason as well, however: it reveals a more serious interest in oriental culture than had hitherto been shown. Beckford's work shows more concern with authenticity of detail, a concern which is evidenced very clearly by the addition of elaborate scholarly notes by Beckford's friend, Samuel Henley.

Then, in the final chapter, we considered the work of some writers of the Romantic period who represent a climax in the development of use of oriental materials. In the poetry of Southey, Byron and Moore there is a very much greater degree of realism in the depiction of the East and its people than was apparent in earlier writers. In prose, this climax in the development was represented in the work of James Morier, in whose novel, Hajji Baba, realistically, and the very modes of thought and writing seem Persian. In this work an English writer may be said to have eliminated the gulf which had always previously existed between non-fictional work about the East and imaginative work with an Eastern background. Morier had captured something of the spirit of Persia, instead of using an Eastern setting for his own European purposes.

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